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Parental choice of minority language education in language shift situations in Brittany and Scotland

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BA, MA, MPhil, PGCE

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

The Open University

In association with the University of the Highlands and Islands

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses issues associated with the impact of bilingual education (immersion and language maintenance programmes) and the vitality of minority languages. It explores multiple factors, including parental expectations, that influence the decisions of parents who have chosen to educate their children through the medium of the standard variety of minority languages, specifically Breton and Gaelic. The thesis considers parental choice in terms of their socioeconomic profile, their language background and their patterns of language use. It is anticipated that this will contribute to explaining how educationally-based interventions work at different levels, including the sociolinguistic impact on the vitality of minority languages. The fieldwork was undertaken for Breton in western Brittany and for Gaelic in the core Gaelic-speaking area of Scotland (Western Isles), and was principally conducted by means of a semi-structured interview schedule administered to 51 sets of parents. In both locations, results indicated that most parents were highly qualified compared to the surrounding population and that they were attracted by early bilingualism and its educational benefits. Most parents had a basic level of skill in the minority language. This was especially the case in Brittany, where parents' skill levels were insufficient to sustain use of the minority language within the family unit and outside the home as an everyday language of communication. For most children, their first contact with the minority language was through school, and the language did not appear to be used outside the classroom. In the Western Isles, the majority of the parents were fluent in Gaelic, although Gaelic was seldom the main household language. For the overwhelming majority of children, parents reported Gaelic as being rarely spoken outside school either within their family or among themselves. This suggests that knowing the minority language does not automatically lead to its use outside the formal classroom setting and that bilingual education does not provide a way to produce active speakers when intergenerational transmission is failing.

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree.

I also certify that this thesis has been written by me. Any help I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLAR	Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CnaG	Comunn na Gàidhlig: Gaelic Development Agency
CnP	Comann nam Pàrant: Parents' Organization
CNSA	Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Àraich: Gaelic Playgroup Association (now TAIC)
CnES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: official name of the Western Isles Council, the local government body of the Western Isles
CP	<i>Cours Préparatoire</i> equivalent to Primary 1
CM2	<i>Cours Moyen</i> equivalent to Primary 7
EBLUL	European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
EILEAN SIAR	Gaelic name of the Western Isles
ELSN	European Language Survey Network
FSL	French as a second language
GME	Gaelic-medium education
GMU	Gaelic-medium unit: Class(es) with Gaelic-medium education but as part of an English-medium school
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LPP	Language Policy and Planning
LHRs	Linguistic Human Rights
LRs	Linguistic Rights
N/A	Not Applicable
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
P1	Primary school year 1
P2	Primary school year 2
RLS	Reversing Language Shift
RLSers	Reversing Language Shifters
RM	Regional Minority

SCROL	Scotland's Census Results Online
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
Stradagan	Gaelic speaking clubs for primary school children
TAIC	Gaelic Living Language, Thriving Culture
UN	United Nations

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis begins with an acknowledgement of two universal realities; all languages shift and change, and the number of languages still in use is steadily diminishing.

Current estimates of the existing number of languages vary according to the way closely-related languages are classified, but most linguists agree on a figure oscillating between 6000 (Krauss, 2007a: 2) and 7000 languages, with *Ethnologue* (Lewis, 2009) listing more than 6700 distinct spoken languages.

However, many linguists worry about the future diversity of languages as so many became extinct in the 20th century; they witnessed the expansion of a few languages, which acquired the status of languages of wider communication with 11 languages being spoken by 70% of the world population (Crystal, 2000:14), whereas they describe the situation of some of the other languages as “grim” (Yamamoto, 2007: 92). For instance, Crystal (2000) and Krauss (1992, 2007a, 2007b) predict a drastic reduction of the number of languages in use over the next century.

At present, it is estimated that over 70% of the world’s population is bilingual or multilingual and “there is good reason to believe that bilingualism or multilingualism has been the norm for most human beings at least for the last few millennia” (Trask, 1999: 30), that is before the advent of modern society and its impact on language diversity.

Globalization brings together people and organizations. New technology has transformed relatively stable patterns of communication, by facilitating exchanges between people. Increased levels of interaction, exchange and geographical mobility generate unprecedented language contact situations creating language conflict and/or language shift. The trend for speakers to shift language over two or three generations to a numerically stronger, more prestigious one which in turn can claim more speakers is a consequence of languages in contact and increased exchanges between people. This would suggest an unassailable trend of rapid reduction in the numbers speaking minority languages.

Nowadays, many indigenous and minority languages with continually declining first language population enjoy an improved status. Most states in the western world encourage the revitalization of these languages through the implementation of state intervention

programmes, namely schools. Given this background, this thesis focuses on situations where educational provision has been offered by the state through the medium of the minority language. The research questions explore the factors influencing the decisions of parents who choose this option. This research addresses issues associated with the impact of bilingual education on the vitality of the minority language in the context of language shift (see Fishman (1991, 2001) and the RLS scale (Reversing Language Shift) or Edwards (1994, 2004, 2007)).

For many children attending these schools, acquisition of the language does not originate in the family unit; it is learnt through effort input (school acquisition or tuition). The variety of the minority language they learn is often far removed from the varieties still spoken nearby. This path represents for some sociolinguists and politicians the revitalization of the declining language. For Baker (2003), bilingual education provides a way to plan when intergenerational transmission is failing: “where there is such a shortfall in language maintenance in families, education becomes the principal means of producing more language speakers” (101).

Yet, to consider only the number of speakers would provide a partial understanding of the actual language situation. It is critical that this increase is assessed within the reality of the social utilization of the language, as this will set the context of language use and its real vitality in everyday sociocommunication (Mann, 2000). Numbers of speakers are valuable data, but this has to be combined with the analysis of their social position, the attitudes and beliefs of people towards the minority language and its interpersonal use within the surrounding community. It is also important to characterize those attracted by the revitalization programmes, in order to understand the reasons for their commitment and their aims for the future of the language.

This has helped to identify specific factors of interest to the thesis that are likely to be associated with parental choices for minority language medium schools. Data on the factors highlighted above will help:

- To locate the researched population on the social spectrum.
- To evaluate their minority language skills, their language use within the family unit and the wider community.
- To identify families’ aspirations and how this information could help understanding the links of bilingual education with the revitalization of minority languages.

- To shed some light on the value of the school language revitalization programmes in reinforcing language continuity and use.

The thesis does not attempt to assess the success of minority language education *per se*, nor does it attempt to analyse the educational attainments of the children. Moreover, the small size of the case study combined with the interpretation of a single researcher will affect the range of applicability for the results. The goal of this research is to explore the parental preference for an education delivered through the medium of the standard variety of a minority language within communities in the process of language shift.

The fieldwork has taken place in the traditionally Breton-speaking area of Brittany in France and in the core Gaelic-speaking area of Scotland, the Western Isles. It is not a comparative study because factors likely to be significant with respect to language maintenance or decline, i.e. national and local policies, populations, patterns of current language use and perhaps most particularly, stage of intergenerational transmission were not considered in relation to their impact on the situation of the minority language.

The context of the two languages under consideration differs substantially despite their many similarities. The two languages have experienced similar declines in use and their speakers are geographically situated at the periphery of the respective state. These two languages have undergone massive lexical transference from the genetically unrelated official and prestigious language (English and French); their standardization process encountered the same difficulties due to their diglossic¹ position against an unrelated standard already occupying the official sphere.

The circumstances surrounding the decline of these two Celtic languages are also similar. During the 19th and 20th centuries, a substantial part of the population had to emigrate or relocate within the country to improve their living conditions (employment reasons, expulsion, famine...). Regarding language use, Gaelic and Breton did not fulfil any official purposes, apart from worship, nor were they used in school as the medium of instruction, where their use was often even forbidden, preventing access to the formal register and affecting the prestige of the languages.

¹ Ferguson ([1959], 2003) defined the concept of diglossia, a terminology introduced by Krumbacher in 1902 to describe the use of the two varieties of Greek (Krachu, 2001: 106). Diglossia consists of one language, separated in a low (L) and high (H) variety, the latter usually represented by the known classical form. Each variety carries more or less prestige and is used accordingly in different contexts, an informal setting for L and a formal one for H; their process of acquisition is different. Fishman (2000 [1965], 2003 [1967]) extended this definition to two unrelated languages being used for different functions.

Whilst the decline of Breton and Gaelic is well-advanced, only recently, the respective states have revised their attitude towards the minority languages. In the midst of the general rising interest in matters of ethnicity and cultural diversity, they attributed positive symbolic characteristics to the minority languages and subsequently, adopted legislative measures to support their revitalization.

Worldwide, against the backdrop of globalization, minority languages are attracting specialist attention and the field of bilingual education has been particularly exposed to this interest. Following positive and encouraging studies, minority language education is experiencing a growing interest. An increasing number of parents request the opportunity to choose such an education for their children and this research hopes to illuminate the multitude of factors affecting this choice and how this choice sits with the revitalization effort.

This is a complex story to narrate in the space of 11 chapters. This is because there is a large number of key concepts informing the essence of the inquiry (i.e. the research questions) at the theoretical and empirical levels, all of which need to be explained. They operate at an inter-disciplinary level and they include:

- Language shift in a context of social integration.
- Language planning following socio-political choices.
- Language and history.
- Language and social perspective.
- Language and educational choices.
- Bilingualism: collective and individual.

Despite these difficulties, I will attempt to present my argument in the clearest manner that my grasp of English will allow me, borrowing concepts from various disciplines. Most chapters will be preceded by text boxes to help the reader to follow the thread of the argument.

Each section of this research enhances understanding of my early personal experiences:

- The literature search explores them at theoretical levels.
- The reports around the research already in the public domain explores them at operational levels.

- The analysis represents a systematic exploration of where, why and how things have shifted (returning in discussion to the literature, but also to the personal on occasion).

All illuminate a) what it means to experience language shift; b) the function and operation of education through a language in shift and c) the rationales on which parents choose education through a language in shift for the next generation. The conclusion links this back to highlight the personal journey through this dramatic language shift, from hearing it as a language in the home and community to the point where it is no longer generally heard.

The first chapter following the introduction explains the reasons for my interest in the topic of the minority languages. It describes through a personal journey some of the concepts I experienced as a child, living the experience of rapid language shift, without fully understanding. This childhood experience is revisited and informed by the results of two previous inquiries. These helped through an iterative and reflective process to shed some light upon the high expectations I nurtured for the minority language school programmes to impact positively on language revitalization.

Chapter Three explains the basis upon which language planning and policies in a given political context are elaborated. It also presents an overview of the frameworks designed to protect linguistic minorities and their associated characteristics according to international and other declarations.

Chapter Four considers the operational levels of the implementation of language planning and policies. The first move explains and summarizes the situations where the language of the linguistic minorities is secure, while the second part deals in detail with the Celtic languages (Irish, Welsh, Gaelic and Breton). Following the description of the language situations and their supporting legislation, an in-depth analysis of the issues arising as to the revitalization effort is given; the situation of each language is considered in relation to its embedding within communities and to the patterns of language use that emerge.

The focus of Chapter Five is on the different models of bilingual education. It presents the benefits children enrolled in additive bilingual programmes can experience and how this has a direct repercussion on parental choice. Then, these advantages are specifically linked

to parental choice in several contexts: when the language used as a medium of teaching has an international stature or is a minority language. This sociological exploration provides a wealth of opportunities in explaining how groups of people differently positioned on the social spectrum attribute different values to the minority language. Understanding of these constructed views of the minority language is key to grasp the rise of the interest for minority languages, including the choice of minority language medium education. Several issues are drawn and conceptualized through the work of seminal researchers.

Chapter Six presents an exploration of bilingualism. It sets the groundwork for positing that two types of bilingualism exist: collective bilingualism and individual bilingualism. It also introduces the factors supporting language maintenance and the challenges bilingual programmes face.

Chapter Seven offers a comprehensive review of researchers' viewpoints within the circle of sociolinguists. The approaches some sociolinguists adopt and the discipline they draw from influence the importance they give to policies and to the availability of choice whilst others analyse the rationale of social practices and try to determine if a particular pattern emerges.

The theoretical rationale with the research questions following this train of thought is presented in Chapter Eight, which also outlines the methodology and the limitations of the study.

In the next chapter, the results of the two case studies are analysed in turn, starting with the Breton findings, followed by the Gaelic findings, which will be discussed in Chapter 10, before the concluding chapter.

2 MINORITY LANGUAGES: RESEARCHING WITH A PERSONAL INTEREST

This introductory chapter starts with a personal journey at several levels:

- A personal journey through language shift.
- A personal journey as a student, into two inquiries made in the field, which raised more questions than answers.
- A more objective journey as a PhD researcher, searching out answers through an empirical process.

In summary, it is the personal journey, which brought the researcher to the research questions.

Language change is part of many people's personal history. It is part of mine.

The next chapter is an account of my own perspective on language shift as a child growing up in Brittany where I witnessed the gradual encroachment of French into every domain where Breton used to be the main language. This part of my personal history is at the root of my interest; it influenced my research position during the subsequent conceptualization in understanding language shift.

2.1 An additional dimension from a personal account

I come to this inquiry with an additional perspective, namely that of personal experience. It is from the foundation of this experience that I have evaluated and selected the frameworks of thinking which help to make best sense of the sociolinguistic processes I have seen in action where minority languages are in shift. These experiences encompass two minority languages, in two different countries: Breton in Brittany and Gaelic in Scotland. My experience of each language is different: I was raised in a Breton-speaking family, and so my experience of Breton relates to every stage of my life; my experience of Gaelic is as an

adult, and to some extent is informed by my earlier life in Brittany. In each case, my experiences have served to raise questions about:

- Language transmission.
- Language attitudes.
- Language use.
- Educational provision through the minority language.

These areas and the issues surrounding them form the core of this inquiry. Exploring the literature associated with these topics has helped to give structure and to identify the research questions on the educational choices of parents in communities going through language shift.

My early experience, in a small Breton-speaking village, coincided with a critical stage in language shift for Breton. In my family, the intergenerational transmission of Breton stopped at me. My childhood experiences provided many examples of people around me making language choices, which, as I grew to adulthood, I wanted to understand more. My understanding went through several stages, and many interpretations left me realizing the complexity of the social and cultural influences which impact on language and on language shift, and where there were gaps in my understanding. They may not have been informed at that point in life by academic thinking but they provided the basis for the search for understanding, which has influenced and informed my thesis.

My personal experiences are therefore integral to the development of this inquiry, and they set the introductory context for its conduct and its direction.

2.1.1 Patterns of language use in the family farm in Brittany

My parents were bilingual. Their first language was Breton and their French they had learnt at school. Breton was the language they used for communicating amongst themselves and with their acquaintances, but they would always address me in French, unless I needed to be rebuked. I understood from an early age that French was the language of social mobility, but especially that it had become the language normal to use with youngsters and among older people that had not grown up and socialized together.

On the farm, every on-going conversation I could hear was in Breton: my parents speaking to each other or to the live-in labourer(s), to my grandmother who came to live with us, to visiting neighbours and so on. However, as soon as I left the confines of the farm, every

interaction I heard was done through French, unless I was with my parents, visiting or encountering a person belonging to their social network. I understood the gist of most conversations taking place among adults. However, I never spoke Breton. Unconsciously, I knew that I was not meant to speak Breton. The everyday language of my generation was French.

French would open access to a whole new world of economic opportunities and social achievement. Above all though, it was the language society as a whole was turning to, seeping gradually into each level of society, until it became the everyday language to use. More and more people were using French, even my parents; it was just one of these things and to them, it certainly did not represent a major concern. When my parents spoke to me, they would naturally switch to French. So, I took on board that conversations in Breton were none of my business and that my language was French. Breton was only used among the adult rural world.

2.1.2 Attitudes perceived to have been associated with language use

The language issue was also linked to a tacit code guiding attitudes and behaviours of the time. It is important to remember that the whole social order was in transition. The rural people, their way of life and their Breton accent were all denounced and exposed to ridicule.² They were old-fashioned and not seen to be part of the new social order.

I too was swept up in this trend of derision: one of my best performing acts was my ability to speak French with a strong Breton accent (with no understanding that my own French was built on a Breton substratum).

Now, I can look back on my attitudes towards what I perceived as being Breton culture and try to analyse the factors which influenced my behaviour. This does not mean that I necessarily feel comfortable about my lack of respect then, but to understand it is important to me.

At the time, such attitudes were widespread: the old inherited objects (Breton antiques now so sought after) were to be destroyed and the old ways were discredited and disregarded. As for the old folks, mainly farmers and retired farmers, they were labelled as '*ploucs*'

² This point is noted by Broudic (1995): "children who do not understand Breton laugh at their Breton-speaking parents" (*my translation* 340) ["les enfants qui ne comprennent pas le breton se moquent de leurs parents bretonnants"].

(unsophisticated peasants) and most of the time laughed at. In scorning their background, people and particularly youngsters tried to put distance between their social origins, their parents' expectations: the world from which they came and the world which they believed they would have to join.

I grew up in the 70's with such expectations.

2.2 The Breton-French interface

2.2.1 Experiencing the Breton-French interface in childhood

The use of Breton although prominent in all familiar interactions amongst adults was solely an oral medium within my parents' social network. Breton was in a diglossic position with French. For all that, the farm premises were not an island of Breton only. The professionalization of the farmer's occupation meant more contact with skilled technicians. French was used with these people, who had a different social status and were outsiders: the vet, the milk collector and the cattle buyer – especially when his son took over the business. Such people were automatically addressed in French as were all the other unknown social elements.

French represented the outside coming into the farm. The daily local paper and the weekly farming magazine were in French as well as the television. The limited written materials I had (few of them books) were only in French.

2.2.2 Historical factors associated with language shift in the family

After the First World War, knowledge of French expanded. In the broader context, the war had brought together people from all over France, fighting to defend their country, an experience which can only reinforce national identity and show to anyone the need for a common language. Military conscription (1875) and schooling (1880s) were made compulsory and these were conducted through the medium of French.

Despite the requirement for every child to follow a primary education in French, it was often achieved with more or less assiduity according to the child's familial situation, especially in rural schools when the children were needed for work. Secondary educated

children were rare in rural areas: it was not free and it was not in anyone's expectation. My parents attended the local primary school, then remained in the township and subsequently married locally. They had learnt French at school, but functioned mainly in Breton, except on rare occasions, when they had contact with some important person. People knew one another from childhood or had a common relative (a third or fourth generation cousin) and could place a person within his social network, linked to a territory: the hamlet. The name of our hamlet was '*Lannos*', so my father like his father was known as '*André Lannos*' and so am I: '*la fille Lannos*' or '*merc'h Lannos*'.

The neighbourhood was a community, corresponding more or less to the family network. People were linked in several ways: they were neighbours, family, friends or allies and working associates and for interacting, they used the language they had been socialized in, namely Breton. As farming was labour intensive, the family and community network participated in agricultural tasks and this represented their principal opportunity to socialize. Children were brought up within these restricted boundaries, which familiarized them with the skills they needed to lead a life, working as labourers or farmers at best or becoming farmers' wives. This was the setting of the social fabric of their future life: they were to stay nearby, belonging to the same social network and continuing similar interactions. It was a conservative society, transmitting local ways as well as the language.³

After the Second World War, the world had changed in many ways. Farmers were urged to mechanize in order to improve yields at a time of food shortage. The language most associated with progress, with new ideas and new machinery was French. Breton calque names for machinery were not attributed any more: French terminology was directly borrowed and pronounced with Breton phonemes. Some periodicals with initially 50% of their content in Breton shifted to French only (see Le Berre, 1995). In the farming context, and beyond, this meant that ideas and vocabulary for discussing mechanical development and progress were disseminated through French i.e. '*Le Paysan Breton*'.⁴

Other social trends were also having an influence. A better education ended the isolation of the rural population and also meant that farmers could learn about new techniques and

³ Previously, in rural settings, social networks and family alliances corresponded also to the same working teams: it was a cohesive and coherent system based on dense and multiplex networks (Milroy and Milroy, 1985). In these closeknit networks with strong interpersonal ties, people tended to conform to the linguistic norm of their network by showing a high level of solidarity (pronunciation, language use, etc.).

⁴ "The Breton language was viewed by rural Bretons as an old tool, no longer useful in a world where power depends on a knowledge of French" (Kuter, 1989: 80).

improve methods of cultivating their land. Improved yields resulted in the need to find people, outside the usual support networks willing to work in exchange for money or produce. Many of these casual workers did not speak Breton. Some came from the neighbouring town, which was mainly French-speaking. My parents wanted to interact with these workers, so they spoke French. Therefore, the farm was no longer a solely Breton-speaking entity as French was gradually encroaching on its territory.

Rural areas were gradually being integrated within France, with the state finally reaching the most remote and conservative parts of its territory (see Weber, 1976). Education, industrialization, improved transport infrastructure and military conscription helped the creation of the French state and the French citizen and every step towards this integration reinforced the idea of French as the language of everyday usage.

External pressure from a centralizing state does not explain fully why an indigenous population changes over to another language. Though my parents were influenced by the national trends towards greater integration within France, nevertheless, as expected, they settled where they had spent their childhood. My father took over the running of his family farm. And THERE was my parents' life. My parents never travelled. Even a trip to the neighbouring town needed planning. Their extended families lived nearby. They stayed in the farm, where they worked and brought up their family. They remained close to their long established social and work networks.

My parents were deeply rooted in the soil and they expected their children to settle around ('around' means around the hamlet in which their home was based). I was often told, '*tu es d'ici*' (you belong here). The implication was that I was closely linked to the area, the people, their way of life and their culture.

Yet, despite all this, my parents' language use altered. I was not closely linked with their language: they spoke the low variety of Breton; I was French monolingual. Despite their social integration and their attachment to where they lived, they had somehow brought up their children through the medium of their second language. This situation was not an isolated occurrence. When I look at the picture from my schooldays in *cours préparatoire* (CP) – equivalent to Primary 1, I can see that the same phenomenon was experienced by the last remaining Breton-speaking households. Under a quarter of my classmates had still

two Breton-speaking parents. Similarly, four of the primary teachers I had were native Breton speakers.⁵

The shift from Breton to French cannot be understood without reference to the economic and social context and the development Brittany was undergoing at that time. In itself, when an indigenous population comes to cease speaking its own language to the very point of not transmitting it to its children anymore, it signals extensive and far-reaching structural change. On the one hand, it can be interpreted as a sign of strength, showing people's ability to adapt to the changing environment by adopting a new language. It is their response to new language influences. On the other, it can be experienced as a great sense of loss.

It is the implications of this latter position that are explored now. I began to ask questions as to why the social and cultural transmission from one generation of Breton-speaking people to the other was now excluding language and why at school I was not taught any Breton.

2.2.3 Personal impact of being denied intergenerational transmission of Breton

During my late teens, I sought only the external reasons for the imposition of that reality on my parents. I reached the conclusion that it could not have been their choice; they would not have deprived me from speaking the language they felt more comfortable with, the language they used to communicate their feelings. As I believed it, they were forced by the state to give it up.

When I look back on that period, I notice a change in my attitude toward the Breton language. Instead of rejecting it, and adopting negative attitudes towards it, I felt there was a missing element in my present, that existed in my background, and which I believed I had been denied. I ascribed new attributes to the Breton language, which I felt was disappearing: I infused it with warmth in opposing it to the rigid and inflexible French language, which to me represented institutions other than the family.

⁵ Information collected from a relative who taught in that same school throughout her whole working life.

My stance at that time took the easy route of accusing successive governments of responsibility for the language decline. I believed the widespread ban enforced through oppressive sanctions had forcibly removed the mother tongue, which people had received from their forebears. Repeated accounts of punishment for speaking Breton, relayed by activists at will, reinforced my conviction. I believed that 'as children, my parents were not allowed to speak Breton in school; they had been humiliated by being singled out and passed on what is commonly known as the '*symbole*' (wooden stick) by a previous offender'.⁶ Learning about earlier laws also strengthened my feeling of injustice. For instance, the Ferry Laws (1881-1882), which imposed education through the medium of French or the ban on preaching in Breton in 1902.

It is true to say that the attitudes of the British and French governments were heavy-handed towards speakers of minority languages. Such governments believed they acted for the benefit of people, through the French perspective of denying the existence of different cultures and languages on its territory: '*la France, une et indivisible*'. This stance was certainly not conducive to the development or even the maintenance of diversity within the confines of the would-be nation state. However, can the language decline be principally attributed to the intransigence of the ideology of these states in the exercising of their political power?

Many authors (activists) have argued from this standpoint, such as Brekilien and Glenmor⁷, and as I understood things then, they were right: it was the repression exercised by the authorities that killed the Breton language. I applied the rationale that we, the Bretons, had been undermined by the French invaders and we were still an oppressed people. I started making mine the well-known nationalist rhetoric and I was wedded to the decolonizing discourse. I felt that my mission was to free the Breton people from their alienation. I was also active on the language front. By that I mean that I spoke of Breton with an ardent fervour. The only problem being that I could not speak it.

I turned into a kind of preacher for Breton, trying to speak it with my best friend who was a fairly fluent Breton speaker (due to the influence of her grandfather). I urged my mother

⁶See Jones (1998b), but see McDonald (1989: 240) for another account regarding this infamous punishment. It is also acknowledged that the same practice was used in Wales (the 'Welsh Not'), in the Basque region (the Basque stick), in Taiwan (the 'dunce board'), etc. (see Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997: 199). There is also the account of Saami children's mouth being washed with soap to prevent them from using the minority language (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1998).

⁷ Brekilien and Glenmor are both well-known Breton activists.

to converse with me through the medium of the language that the authorities had proscribed. But that was to no avail. I sensed the irritation of my friend and my mother as my lack of fluency impeded the flow of conversation and, that after all, what was important was communication and not the language through which it was undertaken. The irritation also derived from the fact that I had violated the social rules of communication by trying to impose the language to be used during the exchange, a language that I was not supposed to know and which was not the language normally used in this particular sociolinguistic context. The language expected to be used with my parents and amongst teenagers was French; I was seeking to change the established rules of communication.

This was enough for my mother to define my behaviour as, if not unbalanced, then certainly unsuitable. Her refusal to speak Breton to me was, as she saw it, in my own best interests for getting on in the world and, I suppose, for her own reputation because her daughter simply could not become a '*Bleo Hir*' (Breton hippy) or worse a '*Breiz Atao*' (collaborators during the Second World War, with now the milder meaning of fanatic). My behaviour was considered to be deviant. It did not conform to the standard pattern, and in the end, I had to adjust to society's rules of communication in line with my mother's expectations.

This did not mean that I understood her refusal, or what I took to be her apparent lack of interest in what I considered to be the essence of Breton culture. I felt that surely, the language should also be her priority, but of course, I believed she was alienated by the French state and its Jacobinism ideology (centralization).⁸ Therefore, I had to pursue my linguistic aspirations alone.

⁸ This term might be associated in this context with the concept of symbolic violence. This type of violence is insidious as it is exercised through the mis-recognition of power relations within society. The dominating group imposes surreptitiously its social agenda, thereby it perpetuates a social structure favoured by and serving the interests of those agents who are already dominant. Symbolic violence is a powerful tool of social annihilation because it is embedded in the very modes of action and structures of cognition of individuals, who have become unknowingly oppressed. Some researchers believe that minority first language speakers suffer from symbolic violence in that they are encouraged to believe by the ruling elite that their language is inferior. This message is spread in a subdued, but effective manner until it unconsciously reaches and affects the deepest thoughts of first language speakers. For instance, the state shuns the language and/or does not recognize the minority language at an institutional level. This would in turn alienate the first language speakers from their own language by having been made to believe that the dominant language is the most appropriate and natural medium through which they can channel their aspirations. As a consequence, minority speakers come to reject or despise their own language, thereby ending its transmission.

My position is that minority language speakers may well experience this symbolic violence at the early stage of a language shift imposed by the dominant group, especially when the use of the minority language is banned at institutional levels. However, at this late stage of language shift in the case of Breton and Gaelic, symbolic violence as an explanation for the lack of interest of first language speakers in

Along with this attachment to the Breton language, I also developed an interest in every aspect I identified with Breton culture, which previously I had been at some pains to keep distant. It was the time of what I now call my 'Breton charismatic period' when I felt a sense of responsibility for the continuity of the Breton language and culture.

I became a member of a Breton dancing club and I developed an enthusiasm for Breton music. I also attempted to improve my language skills by enrolling on several courses. However, I was disappointed with this, because I felt the taught Breton was too remote from the variety I used to hear and therefore I lost interest in this 'foreign' or 'inauthentic' language. The sense of failure remained at a personal level. Though, at the time, surprisingly, I did not register it as likely to have a negative impact on the language revitalization of Breton in general, believing that others were taking the linguistic challenge more seriously.

In more recent times, the challenges put forward, or 'resistance offered' by the language activists began to bear some fruit. I was pleased to learn that many measures had recently been put in place in order to raise the profile and the status of minority languages and particularly Breton, in order to put a halt to the decreasing number of speakers. For instance, in the last sixty years, Breton has been allocated a place in the primary education system in Brittany (Deixonne Law, 1951). I was especially impressed by the development of Breton-medium primary schools, (*Diwan* schools in Brittany, 1977) and their objective to help children become fluent in Breton. For me, it represented the best guarantees for ensuring that children would speak the language their parents had not transmitted to them.

Moreover, many adults started to learn Breton. At that point, my thinking led me to believe that the sheer will of the people combined with the positive discrimination of the state-backed measures would revitalize the language. In addition, I fully expected that people

participating in revitalization programmes belongs to neo-colonialist discourse (Pennycook, 2006). Researchers presume to understand what first language speakers themselves think and how they view their language, but they superimpose their interpretation and establish connections between facts not necessarily linked due to a lack of evidence-based research. More often than not, at that late stage, minority speakers are in a repositioning phase with respect to their language. Ordinary people as part of continuity change their language to adapt to their surrounding environment. Often, the issue that their language is endangered does not come into consideration (de Bot and Hulsen (2002)). People have different priorities from sociolinguists and language planners. And this is one of the reasons why my parents never spoke Breton to me, nor ever would have considered choosing a school where my education would have been given through the medium of Breton.

who had Breton as their first language would be the first to be cheering and helping my vision to come true.

2.3 Linking my background to my academic studies

2.3.1 The first inquiry

This was the background to a first small-scale inquiry, which I undertook in 1992 as an undergraduate student. It focused on the motivations of parents who sent their children to Breton-medium schools. My research questions reflected a positive and optimistic approach to language maintenance as at the time, I was absolutely convinced that this provision would not only reinforce language maintenance, but would also lead to language production with a view to re-establishing language reproduction. This was my current frame of mind when I started conducting sets of interviews with parents of children who were receiving minority language education.

The first inquiry provided me with additional insights. One of the outcomes associated with the investigation was that I realized that the state alone cannot be held responsible for the demise of a language. I now understood that other more complex forces also influenced language shift. For example, I learnt that many languages or dialects have no official status (such as Schwyzertütsch and Anglo-Nigerian Pidgin), yet they are developing without any state-backed language promotion measures. In fact, I became acutely aware that language revitalization has to be deeply embedded into the societal context, taking into account the population who uses the language, its cohesion, its viability and its development within the common project of which it forms part.

From the insight obtained from my first inquiry, I also realized that most parents who chose a minority language education for their children belonged to a privileged sociocultural background and were highly interested in early bilingualism as a skill. In this new light, I started to address the reasons underlying my parents' disinterest toward the Breton revivalist movement. At first, reflecting on the past, questions began to emerge:

- Why did I not hear about Breton-medium schools?

- Why had I not been taught Breton at school despite the number of pupils living in Breton-speaking homes and the availability of Breton-speaking primary teachers?
- Why when I started to lead my mother into a Breton conversation, would she automatically revert to French?
- Why was there, amongst the older generations, constant disapproval regarding the teaching of Breton, which was after all their first language?
- Why from my family was nobody sent to a Breton-medium school?

I realized here that I was driven by my own desire to see the language flourish and that it had an impact on the interpretation of what the reality might be. I had at that point thought that the native speakers were alienated and that they were conditioned to think their culture to be second-rate and useless in economic terms. I believed that fighting for the recognition of their language would help them reassert their confidence in using their language. Building on this, I was really convinced that any official recognition or public display would certainly be warmly welcomed by those who had Breton as their first language.

However, I had to move away from this kind of assumption, through conducting my first inquiry and observing the reaction of locals and Breton-speaking people to a language-sensitive development put in place by the local council.

What happened was that two Breton monolingual signposts appeared in our hamlet. I looked at the signposts and I was disappointed to notice that once again like the name of my township, the council chose a form that was phonologically remote from the way local Breton speakers pronounced the name of their hamlet. I asked two neighbours about it and their opinion was that it represented a total waste of money as there was nothing wrong with the old ones. Anyway, it did not make any difference to the life of the locals as they still lived in '*Lannos*', still went to the town of '*Treugn*' for their weekly shopping and still used the French toponymy when asked for directions by strangers.⁹

Something similar happened in response to the Breton-medium school set up in my town. I found no Breton-speaking parents and as for the grandparents, when connected at all to the language, it was only remotely. These findings are corroborated by Judge (2000) who

⁹ Costaouec (2002) also remarked that "the spelling has little to do with the traditional pronunciation of place names" (*my translation* 134) ["les notations retenues n'ont que peu de rapport avec la prononciation traditionnelle des toponymes"].

noted that out of the eleven older children schooled in the Breton-medium in *Trégunc*, “none had Breton-speaking parents, and few had Breton-speaking grandparents” (57). So, Breton-medium schools attracted little backing from what should have been its core supporters. In fact, initially, when some first language Breton speakers learnt about the school, there was scepticism that anything beneficial to the child could be gained through learning Breton.

The core of the Breton-speaking population saw the parents whose children were at that school as a bit ‘noisy’, but considered that, after all, they were free to fundraise and argue for an education through the medium of Breton as long as they kept themselves to themselves. The school did not concern most of those whose first language was Breton. They saw themselves as being totally removed from the issue, until the enthusiasm started to catch the council’s attention and the activists were helped with setting up a new Breton-medium school. This level of development was met with disapproval by many of the local people, a high proportion of them native Breton speakers. For them, Breton was not a language for teaching or writing and they did not approve of subsidizing something they did not consider a priority nor the right thing to do. Feelings were running high, and a great many derogatory comments were heard to be made, in Breton, about the Breton-medium school.

So, where did this leave me?

My assumptions about the Breton revitalization or revivalist movement had not passed the reality test. However, what I did take from my observations was that official measures implemented without any local consultation or involvement, in a top-down fashion (so often criticized and denounced by the opponents of the Jacobinist state) were not popular among the very people for whom they were supposed to be intended. Elected members had implemented policies on behalf of Breton first language speakers, many of whom appeared either to disagree or to take little notice of the new developments. In that light, it was not surprising that these well-intentioned measures were bound to have little impact upon the targeted group, still in the process of language shift.

What was apparent though, was that some parents were picking up the option of Breton-medium education offered through the *Diwan* system and this trend was becoming popular. I knew that I needed to look at these issues in much greater depth than before.

2.3.2 Summary of the second inquiry

That was in Brittany...but I wondered if it was also the case for other minority languages. My fieldwork would be in Scotland with Gaelic-medium parents. My second inquiry was in preparation for a DEA,¹⁰ (which corresponded to a first year of PhD) and was designed with a bigger sample (100 parents contacted mainly by questionnaires) in order to verify and to broaden my understanding of the phenomenon I had discovered. This study was undertaken in Glasgow and on the island of Lewis, focusing on Stornoway and a 15-mile radius beyond.

Two findings confirmed and reinforced my beliefs. First, the socioeconomic background of the parents was similar in the two locations I chose to conduct my fieldwork. Most of the parents were highly educated and had high occupational status. In Lewis, 42.6% had a good level of qualification and 32.4% belonged to the professional social category, while the proportions in Glasgow were 50% and 39.5%. The findings contrasted with initial expectations because the majority of the minority language speakers of Gaelic belonged to the lower socioeconomic strata, the non-skilled workers (rural workers, fishermen, factory workers, see General Register Office for Scotland (1994)). In Lewis, I only found one parent belonging to that stratum, but his spouse was a teacher. The other common characteristic was the high number of parents without a connection to the minority language (including even foreign nationals) especially in Glasgow. These parents were especially interested in early bilingualism for their children.

Another research aim was to identify if the familial environment was conducive to minority language production, with the parents being either minority speakers themselves or learning the language intensively. The findings were surprising; many parents lacked any fluency in Gaelic. However, most reported speaking Gaelic to their children (94% in Lewis; 100% in Glasgow). In order to corroborate or contradict these figures, for each set of parents I asked the teachers for their own assessment regarding the possibility for the parents engaging in a meaningful exchange with their children. The teachers' response was noticeably different. In Lewis, they estimated that 50% of the overall parents were able to have a conversation with their children, while in Glasgow, the figure dropped to 23%.

¹⁰ Goalabré, F. (1994) *Ecoles bilingues d'Ecosse: les parents et leurs motivations*, DEA (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation), Université de Brest Occidentale.

These findings showed that parents, not necessarily with a Gaelic language background but with a higher socioeconomic position were more likely to pick up the option of a Gaelic-medium education. They also confirmed that the language remained largely confined to the classroom and that few interactions of a spontaneous character took place in the minority language at home.

2.3.3 Current research

The current exploration follows a similar line of inquiry. In the following chapters, I set out to explore where my early observations and understandings fit with what emerges from the research literature and where the inquiry as a whole can be positioned at a conceptual level.

The main focus of the exploration is to identify the motivations of those parents who chose a minority language education for their children in the context of language shift. Through this, I hope to be able to offer additional insight into a particular aspect of language shift, namely how the options of education through minority languages are taken up by communities in which minority languages are used, and in contexts where there is diversity in the levels of active and conscious interest in language issues generally and revitalization of language in particular.

This chapter presented my early observations of a community close to the completion of language shift ending the diglossic arrangement that lasted over several generations. It also gave an account of two previous inquiries in which I noticed that the first language speakers did not necessarily take advantage of minority language education provision for their children.

The two following chapters provide an overview of some aspects of language revitalization. The next chapter proposes to describe the framework of language revitalization, which will be followed by examples of the way states accommodate the different linguistic groups within their territory.

3 OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING AND THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter leaves the topic of people experiencing language shift to concentrate on the conception of policies at institutional level and the legal documents which support their implementation. It will then explain briefly the underlying issues of linguistic rights, which represent the basis for the application of the revitalizing measures.

Latterly, in order to reverse language shift, funding has been released to implement policies designed to improve the status and the diffusion of minority languages. After having been deemed unworthy for performing high social functions, minority languages have now gained more recognition in the public domain and, as such, they are more present in arenas that were until recently closed to them, such as government and education. This promotion is occurring worldwide; in the Americas as in the Southern Ecuadorian Andes with Quichua; in central Mexico with Nahuatl; in New Zealand with Maori and also in Europe with the Celtic languages. This situation will be examined in the next chapter.

At present, many minority languages are officially acknowledged or recognized. This results in their increased visibility, in the marking of the linguistic landscape with bilingual signposting and the development of their corpus.

On an international level, there is general agreement on the necessity to protect minority language speakers by providing a legally binding structure designed to ensure their respect. Numerous conflicts and human rights abuses perpetrated by authorities in power have prompted international bodies to draw up charters, resolutions and covenants to provide a legal framework so that states respect and protect their minorities and also supply them with services. Most states – some prior to these legal documents – have introduced measures to guard against the discrimination of minorities, for example in the field of education with the teaching of the minority mother tongue.

In this section, we will first explore the complexities of drawing up language policies, before considering the overarching guiding principles within which some documents have been drafted.

3.1 Language policy and planning

3.1.1 Definition

Language policy and planning¹¹ (LPP) has existed in some form or another for centuries, from Antiquity through to more recent times. It has seen the creation of language academies and the choice of national languages (e.g. in Norway with Nynorsk versus Bokmål – Haugen (1972a) or in Greece with Katharevousa and Dhimotiki – Holton (2002)). It emerged as a separate discipline in the 1960s in the context of decolonialization, where its aim shifted away from the dissemination of the official and ‘pure’ language through a mass education system to the reappraisal of the maintenance of linguistic diversity (Ferguson, 2006: 13-4). This reconsideration induced a change within the LPP approach from ‘top-down’ to ‘bottom-up’ (Kaplan and Baldhauf, 1997) although this is not as straightforward as it seems, because it represents ideological choices. LPP covers all the societal interventions aimed at influencing language behaviours and so can be defined as the sum of “explicit and premeditated strategies that societies and communities employ to advance or change their use of language, for example through government policy or educational practice” (Tonkin, 2005: 120).

Mar-Molinaro (2000) makes a clear distinction between the two concepts of language policy and language planning. Language policies reflect the decisions and choices of the official ruling entity; they frame the state’s long-term objectives, based on the analysis of the initial situation (Kaplan and Balhauf, 1997). Language planning (LP) is the implementation stage; it sets up the operational programme of work through designing the means and procedures for the realization of the language policies, which will have consequences on every level of one’s life (for instance, from the macro level with an Education Act, leading to reforms implemented by a local government setting up new

¹¹ The concept of language planning was first defined by Weinreich (1953), although it is most often linked and wrongly attributed to Haugen (1966) according to Lo Bianco (1999).

educational programmes and training, to the micro level with the offer of educational opportunities).

Language planning is usually divided into two areas of language interventions: status planning and corpus planning. The first category deals with the selection of a variety, its acceptance through wider diffusion and its allocation to official roles in different domains, whilst the second addresses its standardization or norm codification (graphization, grammatication, lexication, etc.) and its elaboration or modernization (Haugen, 1983: 275). Nahir ([1984:294-7] cited in Tonkin, 2005: 122-3) has developed an eleven-point classification of language-planning goals, which also includes language maintenance and revival.

Two other dimensions have since been added to the concept of LP. First, acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989: 43) is concerned with identifying and guiding the channels through which people learn the language, namely education, family and society. Following Cooper's suggestion of the need for family language policy,¹² Baker (2001) has introduced the idea of family language planning “to ensure a relatively stable and enduring bilingualism” (93).

3.1.2 Institutionalization and the standard variety (two examples)

For some sociolinguists, official recognition of the minority language represents the best way for the diffusion and acceptance of a standard form of a local dialect. Jaffe (1999, 2008), in her ethnographic research on Corsican and the ideologies linked to the language thinks that the future of Corsican is tied to the “collective acceptance of Corsican language standardization and normalization” (1999: 280). The recognized existence of a standard variety would close the debate about what constitutes authentic Corsican. Currently, each variety of the language is solely associated with the area where the speaker comes from and the use of one variety as a standard “divides Corsicans into competing linguistic camps” (279). For Jaffe, one solution to bring Corsicans to accept a standard variety with its neologisms is provided by bilingual radio (280). Jaffe sees the institutionalization of the Corsican language as having positive consequences. She draws a comparison with Welsh and Catalan where the creation of legally-required situations for the use of these minority

¹² This is also mentioned by Spolsky (2004: 43).

languages improved their status. For her, this would represent a step towards the creation of a “critical mass of practitioners which can play a critical role in the standardization and normalization of the language” (281). This is where “[l]anguage planning can provide strong pragmatic incentives for people to learn the language and build up that very practice” (279).

A similar view is held by M.C. Jones (2000) on the revitalization of minority languages (Welsh, Breton, Jèrriais), which could be roughly summarized as follows: forget local varieties, concentrate on the standards. For the revitalization of Jèrriais in the Channel Islands, confronted with “[t]he rapid depletion of the pool of [native] speakers” (185), M.C. Jones banks on second language learners using the language as long as they internalize it as part of their Island identity marking; “this symbolic role may well serve as a springboard for its use...beyond the ceremonial” (187). For her, “[t]he dialect has lost its primary *raison d’être*, namely as a tool of communication, and the restoration of its use will depend upon whether it succeeds in acquiring a secondary function” (187).

Many authorities have taken that direction. They provide institutional support for language reproduction and production with clear economic and status-enhancing benefits for motivated people through offering attractive jobs for minority language speakers. For example, in developing the provision of services in the minority language, the state creates job opportunities for minority language speakers, the adult population is encouraged to brush up or learn the minority language and children can be taught through the standard variety.

So, the state along with several other bodies, is involved in developing the language corpus and status to ensure an optimum support and spread of language. In doing this, they hope to change the negative attitudes that many people have towards the language, to show that the language can be used for every social function and to spread the new linguistic norm.

3.1.3 Language planning and policy and its ideological biases

LPP is linked to several fields: political, social and educational. None of them necessarily has the same understanding of language functions or development and therefore have different priorities. To prevent potential clashes of interests and misguided language planning measures, language policy-makers have to research and understand the language

situation in relation to its speakers, their motivations and language use, their territorial spread and structural context and so on (Cooper, 1989: 98). They need to situate all of these factors within a political, cultural and modernization process. It is worth insisting that

“[t]o develop a soundly based language policy, it is necessary to discover what languages are spoken in a society, what purposes those languages serve, who speaks them, where, in the geography of that community, those speakers are physically located, and what motivation there is for preserving those languages” (Kaplan and Balhauf, 1997: 125).

Even the best comprehensive study and inventory of a language situation cannot lead to the drafting of sound and ideologically neutral language policies, as G. Williams (1996) states “LP is a feature of a particular discourse, one in which a particular understanding of society and the social process is implicit” (289). Any LPP document and plan represent the ideological views of the policy-makers prevailing at a certain time and in a given context; they are necessarily laden. A particular orientation in language policies serves “the interests of those in power [including the]...socioeconomic interests of the elites” (Paulston, 1997: 78) and this is why Blommaert (1996) is convinced that any research of a historical nature on language policy and planning would uncover “[i]nteresting stories of ‘bricolage’, invention and reconstruction” (215).

For instance, “[s]tandard languages do not arise via a natural course of linguistic evolution or suddenly spring into existence. They are created by conscious and deliberate planning, which may span centuries” (Romaine, 2000: 88). Standard languages are constructed and supported by the intelligentsia that has chosen a particular variety over the others, usually their own. Then, this idealized, ‘homogenous’ spoken language is used as a model for the written form, which is disseminated through the institutions dominated by that same intelligentsia. In this sense, “linguistic development and enhanced prestige is a consequence of, rather than a necessary condition for, the adoption of a language as a medium of education” (Ferguson, 2006: 189). Educational is part of this system that relays the dominant ideology, sometimes unknowingly. This is why Tollefson (2008) is calling for more research “to develop a better understanding of how common institutional practices contribute to inequality, largely without conscious discussion or critical awareness by participants in educational systems” (10).

This bias toward a certain variety is also valid for educational systems and the teaching of minority languages. The difficulty is especially acute when these languages are in a diglossic situation and/or have been recently standardized. Many first language speakers

do not go along with the language planners' wishes: some are disaffected by the language revitalization that is theoretically designed for their benefits; others feel alienated from the chosen written form, which they often find too remote from their own spoken variety. Examples of these are Breton in McDonald (1989) or in M.C. Jones (1998b, 1995); Maori in Kaplan and Baldhauf (1997: 292); French in Moujeon and Beniak (1989) or in Heller (1999a, 2003); Quechua in Hornberger (1995) or in King (2000) or in Mar-Molinaro (2000) or in Marr (2002); Quichua in McCarty (2008).

For Kaplan and Baldhauf (1997), it is the lack of consultation and empowerment, embodied in a top-down LPP that forms the origin of this dichotomy: "those *people* for whom language is being planned should have a say in its actual planning and implementation" (*emphasis original*, Kaplan and Baldhauf, 1997: 55). A 'bottom-up' approach to LP would assuredly bring a better understanding of actual language practices and expectations. This is also Davis's (1999) view for whom "[b]oth economic and educational development at the roots, or community level, are more likely to be successful than externally imposed and controlled models...Even within communities, development of economic and educational programmes may reveal more grass than roots" (90).

Without involving the native speakers or even better, letting them decide for themselves, it is likely that revitalization programmes will miss their objectives. Even so, an inclusive and respectful LPP approach only represents a basic solution to a much more complex issue.

3.1.4 Is institutional support the panacea?

Institutional support for the declining language can help but will never be enough on its own. It might "engender and reinforce social attitudes and behaviours...However...not even authoritarian governments can endlessly continue to implement laws that do not gain general acceptance and that are not reinforced by and congruent with basic societal processes, rewards and values" (Fishman, 1985b: 60).

Many minority language situations demonstrate this point, the most researched being Irish. Despite being the official language of Ireland and benefiting from an extensive range of language planning measures, its number of active speakers is still declining (De Brún, 2006). By contrast in Italy, Coluzzi (2008) has noticed that the most vibrant regional

languages do not benefit from any legal support; they “tend not to be promoted, in the sense that fewer associations and organizations exist to protect them and their presence is more limited in education (including adult education) and mass media” (223). The end of the consensual diglossic arrangement that prevailed for generations is not necessarily the solution to revitalizing a language, especially if the demand is not supported by the bulk of the native speakers.

Language planners have to realize that prestige is tied to other interlinked factors such as the economic, attitudinal and cultural and cannot be superimposed on to an existing situation; “form tends to follow functions” (Ferguson, 2006: 188). Functions have to be endorsed first by the native (primary) language speakers in order not to seem artificial and for LPP to have a real impact. One can only observe that “providing official recognition to a previously ignored language will mean little to its speakers unless the move is part of a more extensive and in-depth transformation of these speakers’ relationship to structures of state power and resource distribution” (Stroud, 2007: 530).¹³

The example of the standardization of Quechua in Peru illustrates perfectly the conflict between the language planners in favour of a five-vowel approach based on Spanish orthography and the first language speakers who wish to include only three vowels. Hornberger (1995) and Marr (2002) show that the dispute is not only about choosing the number of vowels of the standard, but about socioeconomic divisions, differing educational backgrounds and regional affiliations resulting in opposing views. Through their research, they have identified three main groups fighting for the recognition of a different Quechua. First, the international linguists part of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), benefiting from a high socioeconomic status and who are especially interested in the wider use of unified Quechua; next, the Peruvian linguists and educational specialists, who are mostly well-off first language Spanish speakers with a coastal culture and close to the Lima political power centre and want a Quechua different from the ‘*campesinos*’ (peasants) and finally the Quechua Academy members calling themselves ‘*indigenas*’, who are usually first language speakers, with a highland culture. This last group adopts a strictly local approach: it wants its own variety to be chosen, although this again presents a source of major conflict between Quechua-speaking communities. This

¹³ This is also Ó Riagáin’s (1997: 170-1) opinion. This researcher is sceptical about the power of LPP to revitalize a declining language unless an array of features, with at the outset no obvious connection to the language itself are taken into account.

highly complex situation shows that the choice of an oral variety to be standardized is more about issues of power between groups who are socially differently located. One wonders which group will win the Quechua vowel contest.

We can see that state support facilitates a language gaining prestige and being disseminated through visible networks such as media and the schools and this also applies to a minority language. However, it is important to bear in mind that the state, through the enforcement of its policies, attempts to shape its sociolinguistic profile (Blommaert, 1996) and that the degree of institutionalization and state endorsement of a language is linked to its current national interests of either seeing it spreading, becoming extinct or revitalized. LPP is a “highly political and ideological activity” (Tonkin, 2005: 120) because it represents a politically-backed choice aimed at changing, encouraging or dissuading language practices.

History is awash with examples of language eradication policies or state-backed support schemes, not always delivering the expected outcomes; Kurdish, in the face of a repressive Turkish position still persists, while Irish is not being revitalized despite substantial financial and positive discrimination from the Irish state. A ‘successful’ example of LPP is the French state; since the French Revolution, it has implemented a series of ‘effective’ language policies centred around the acquisition, spread and the use of the French language with the aim of achieving linguistic equality (de Witte, 1992).

In order to prevent such cases of authoritarian language planning and at times language repression (subtractive bilingualism¹⁴), international and supranational organizations have drafted various documents.

¹⁴ When the state does not foster the development of an indigenous language or tries to suppress it.

3.2 International and supranational resolutions

All the declarations, resolutions or conventions presented below have been drawn up to encourage or legally enforce the respect of minorities, which present different characteristics from the main population. It is a vast topic comprising several approaches. The following paragraphs will briefly consider some documents, international and European, concerning only the regional (also called autochthonous or indigenous) minorities.

3.2.1 The international documents

The international obligations listed below show a progression from a protective stance towards minorities to an “active ‘positive discrimination’ (‘affirmative action’) for the purpose of equality” (McCarty, Skutnabb-Kangas and Magga, 2008: 302). They stress to a public audience the importance of ethnic rights by officially requesting the respect of certain characteristics of minorities, like their language. They open an avenue for minorities through which they can legally require the enforcement of their tailored language policies, despite being in a minority position. “[P]roviding minorities with strong constitutional guarantees can...become an important reinforcement to ensure their survival. These guarantees allow them to develop their own voice and to require services and institutional structures that fulfil their objectives” (Martel, 1996: 149).

The first list of documents below presents documents that relegate any reference to language to their respective appendices (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1995: 81).

- The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948);
- The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966);
- The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966);
- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989);

Most of the documents below indicate a trend towards the recognition of minority language education (see de Varennes, 2003; 2008). However, the exhaustive list includes only two binding documents (only conventions and charters are binding).

- The UNESCO *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960) recognizes the right for minorities to organize their own educational system using their mother tongue as a medium of teaching, as long as the required standards for a successful education are met and that it does not result in linguistic ghettos (see UNESCO, 2010a: 6 and de Varennes, 1996: 224);
- The UN *Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic Minorities* (1992) states that minorities have the right “to use their own language, in private and in public” (Art 2.1) and that the “[s]tates shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities...to develop their culture, language” (Art 4.2) (cited in Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1995: 96);
- The UN *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* (1993);
- The *Delhi Declaration and Framework for Action* (1993) recommends mother tongue education before the introduction of another language;
- The *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (1994) supports autonomy or self-government, mother tongue education and the respect for political, economic and cultural characteristics;
- The *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* (1996) supports the right of each community to decide the extent of the presence of their language at all levels within their territory (García, 2009: 90);
- The UNESCO *Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity* (updated in 2002) encourages linguistic diversity, “to respect the mother tongue at all levels of education, and to foster the learning of more than one language from a very early age” (Extra and Gorter, 2008: 46);
- The UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003).
- The UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007).

The declarations, conventions and charters aim to respect, safeguard and protect minorities; they also aim to give them the right to live and develop their own cultural attributes and organize educational provision. In relation to minority languages, many scholars, especially Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995) passionately argue that unhelpful or repressive language policies have a negative impact on the person's well-being. They insist on the recognition and respect of linguistic human rights (LHRs) to

prevent the development of “sophisticated forms of racism, ethnicism...and linguicism” (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1995: 104).

During their research (1995), they noticed a positive evolution towards the international recognition of LHRs. For instance, the *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* (UNESCO in 1996) recognizes the right to use one's language in private and public along with the right to education, media and administrative services in one's own language. Such a declaration offers theoretically a protection against “monolingual reductionism” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). According to Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995), these new pieces of legislation, in arguing for equality and positive discrimination, will present a challenge to the hegemony of majority languages (104).

The LHRs perspective allows minorities to speak, identify, maintain and acquire full fluency of their language; this is hardly a point anybody can argue with, as it represents a moral stance adopted in the *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*. Though in reality, moral assertions are not necessarily followed by legal entitlements and on the ground, one can only notice, that “there has been great reluctance to view policies of official bilingualism or multilingualism as ‘rights’ rather than pragmatic accommodations” (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 5).

All the same, these declarations have prompted some supranational organizations (e.g. the European Union – EU) and states to reflect on their linguistic configuration and set-up and this has resulted in some legal adjustments to accommodate their existing language minorities. This topic will be considered in the next section.

3.2.2 European documents

In the past twenty years, in collaboration with international bodies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and the Council of Europe have shown their intention to ascertain the “respect of human diversity, respect of the centrality of language and culture, and respect of fundamental human rights which also include linguistic and cultural rights based...on freedom of expression, religion and non-discrimination” (de Varennes, 2003: 5-6). These resolutions, some of which are listed below, require the respect of language minorities and recommend educational provision in their own language.

- The Council of Europe *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms* (1950);
- The *Arfè resolution* (1981), (1983), the *Kuijpers Resolution* (1987) and the *Killilea Resolution*¹⁵ (1994) in supporting the provision of minority language education have provided the basis for the charter below;
- The Council of Europe *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (ECRML) (1992, in force 1998). Some articles promote the use of languages in education and media;
- The *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* (1993) requires the respect of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity;
- The *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1998) recognizes “the right to learn the minority language” (Art. 14) (cited in Extra and Gorter, 2008: 31);
- The *Oslo Recommendations* (1998) include articles on the linguistic rights of national minorities;
- The *Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities* (2000) provide a permanent forum on indigenous issues.

The pledge of European member-states argues for equality of opportunity and the respect of cultural diversity with trilingualism from an early age as a policy goal for every European citizen (Whitebook adopted by the European Commission in 1995); in effect, it means the learning and teaching of English as a third language for everyone in a perspective of ‘glocalization’ (Extra and Gorter, 2008: 42). A special Commissioner for Multilingualism has been appointed since 2007 to encourage language learning and promote plurilingualism. Within this ethical context, the European Union and the Council of Europe are the two main agencies in charge of assessing the minority situation (with EBLUL¹⁶ and the Euromosaic project regularly providing overviews of language minorities, 1996, 1999, 2004 or ELSN,¹⁷ 1996). The OSCE with the *Oslo and Hague Recommendations* is equally active in safeguarding the rights of minorities, although its first aim is to avoid intergroup conflict. It has appointed a High Commissioner on national

¹⁵ This resolution called on states to sign the ECRML (Wright, 2004: 194).

¹⁶ European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.

¹⁷ European Language Survey Network.

minorities “charged with promoting dialogue between potential adversaries, encouraging mutual confidence and finding solutions to intergroup tensions” (Wright, 2004: 198).

Institutionally, the various European Union bodies have moved towards offering legal protection to speakers of minority languages through legally binding documents, which require all the signatory members to make provisions for their linguistic minorities. One of the ECRML’s aims is to protect and promote language diversity within Europe, by putting legal obligations on the states and persuading public authorities to embrace commitments to prevent any discriminatory practices. It also encourages the states to scrap directives detrimental to the use of minority languages and instead seek their promotion through increased recognition and institutionalization. The charter also brought the idea of language protection as a cultural heritage and asset to safeguard, comparable with the protection of species in environmental law (Woehrling, 2008: 64).

Despite these positive points brought forward by the ECRML, one has to bear in mind that EU states “are free in their choice of which RM [regional minority] languages to include” in the ECRML (Extra and Gorter, 2008: 31) and that language policy rests with the individual members of the European Union. Public officials have an obligation to provide services in the minority language “where reasonable and justified...[I]t is not a right which appears every time there is a minority language or a demand to use a minority language” [and if the number of speakers is deemed too low,] “it is not a violation of a language or minority right for public officials not to use this language” (de Varennes, 2003: 10). The adhering states are under no obligation to offer even language teaching in the regional languages (Extra and Gorter, 2008: 31).

The charter also allows “not to have the same rules for all languages” (Woehrling, 2008); and despite the dual language recognition, it clearly establishes that the minority language, along with its speakers, will legally remain under the auspices of the member state. The minority language when it is acknowledged is considered as a complementary language to the official one and therefore, the ECRML frames the RM language in a multilingual cultural project (Woehrling, 2008).

Moreover, the definitions of the words ‘minority’ and ‘regional’ are not specified (Dunbar, 2008; Extra and Gorter, 2008; Woehrling, 2008): they remain vague and imprecise, leaving room for each governing state to arrive at a ‘convenient’ interpretation. Despite the

ECRML being a legally binding document, this ambiguity results in a wide variety of bilingual provision across the diverse EU states and it is perhaps bewildering to note that states may even opt out of some articles.¹⁸

Another point worth mentioning, is that behind the EU wish ‘to celebrate linguistic diversity’, each country states its own agenda in order to safeguard the significance of its own national language in relation to each neighbouring country. Although most European countries perceive their official language to be protected and not under imminent threat, they are vigilant. For example, they may have fought to obtain recognition of their language as working languages in the EU or passed laws in order to limit the intrusion of another language (e.g. Toubon Law in France, 1994). This on-going monitoring and recognition of their own main official language allows for their status to be raised on the international scene, as well as benefiting from the continuing development of their corpus.

3.3 Linguistic rights: collective or individual rights?

“LHRs proponents tend to take for granted that both individual and collective rights apply” (Paulston, 1997: 77), but language is not defined in any of the documents cited above as a collective right, but as a personal right in relation to members of a particular linguistic group. This is at the heart of LPP. May (2008) explains that the emphasis on personal autonomy and freedom was paramount to the way the United Nations after the Second World War chose to define rights as individual attributes. The definition arrived at, in keeping with the liberal-democratic principle of individual freedom, excludes a communitarian view of rights likely to infringe individual liberties. This important aspect is stressed by Laitin and Reich (2003) who wrote that “theorists should not assume that access to one’s own societal culture is what every individual wants” (89). More specifically, in relation to linguistic rights (LRs), it legally prevents the application of a blanket language policy on a territory through coercive measures.

The paradigm of LR as individual rights or collective rights of language groups is fraught with numerous difficulties and the aim of this work is not to research them. For this reason

¹⁸ The opt-out clause is mentioned by Skutnabb-Kangas (2008) and by Woehrling (2008).

an extremely brief outline of the conception of LRs according to various critical perspectives will be presented.

de Varennes (1996, 2003) in his dense and well-researched studies has analysed the various international conventions and declarations and has found that human rights are not necessarily linked to LRs, but primarily to the well-being of the person: “human rights are not and have never been concerned with safeguarding languages” (1996: 275). LRs belong to the individual rights of a person. Their aim is to prevent any form of discrimination taking place which can be collectively inflicted on a group of people resulting in a feeling of distress at the individual level (2003: 7). This point also stands for the EMRCL; in his analysis of the charter, Woehrling (2008) states that the ECRML does not contain a specific clause about language, but only in relation to the avoidance of discrimination through its use in private or in public and its lack of educational provision.

This position rules out a legal framework defending the existence of group-based LRs, although Patten and Kymlicka (2003) reconcile the two opposite stances, collective versus individual, through the notion of justice and equal treatment for the members of linguistic groups. This understanding of LRs as an individual right framed in a particular context of that same language being used by a part of a population has laid the basis of the two principles which states use to organize institutionally their language use: the principle of territoriality and the principle of personality (both introduced in the next chapter). These scholars argue that the state has a moral obligation to represent fairly all of its citizens, especially when a group associated with a particular territory reaches a certain threshold in number. This equality in treatment can be achieved by giving different rights to individuals of different groups, such as in Quebec.

Edwards (2007) adopts a more nuanced approach, seeing LRs fitting into a “‘hybrid’ category” (455). His justification being, that even if they are individual characteristics and part of the make up of personal identity, they only exist through the connection of a specific group membership. This approach is not only focused on the language as a structure used by individuals, it also takes into account the sociolinguistic embedding of the language across its speakers.

May (2008) proposes a rethink of the nation-states in a more linguistically plural and inclusive way by applying ‘tolerance-oriented’ language rights and where appropriate

‘promotion-oriented’ rights for the language. This approach would lead to more representational multinational and multilingual states by directly contesting the historical inequalities” (26) endured by minority language speakers.

One has to remember that LRs and especially the accompanying language implementations are based on political compromise negotiated in particular linguistic and political settings; a point developed in the following chapter, when we leave aside the abstract field and concentrate on examples showing how some countries accommodate their minority speakers.

4 SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF SAFE AND ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

This chapter is central to understanding how historical and social contexts not only impact on the language arrangements at institutional levels, but also on the integration of language policies with regard to first language speakers.

Language policies at the implementation stage are the subject of this chapter, which begins with a brief outline of successful examples of language maintenance and revitalization, while the second part will explore in more detail the position of the Celtic languages. The topic of bilingual education will be developed in the following chapter.

4.1 Overview of some countries with safe minority languages

The various contexts used as examples below help in understanding the reasons why language contact can result in different outcomes. Some countries or regions are held as success stories for having kept their multilingual situation or turned the declining language towards a more favourable course. They draw together within their borders several groups whose language is protected by their respective legal and institutional systems, guaranteeing separateness, but still allowing communication within a tightly controlled framework. There, one language is used within the group or for special functions and one or several other languages for outgroup interactions. Examples of countries or regions fitting this model are Switzerland, Belgium, Quebec and Luxembourg.

However, one should note that language policies in many of these countries are administered on the principle of unilingualism as “two solitudes” for example by canton, province or function.

4.1.1 Switzerland

The territoriality principle functions at institutional level like the model of a unilingual state where the majority of the inhabitants are mostly monoglot. It is solidly established in Switzerland with unilingual cantons fully controlling their linguistic frontiers. The vital centres (Laponce, 1987) of the three official Swiss languages are sheltered in secure hinterlands protected by legal institutions, unlike Romansh, the fourth national language, which has neither a vital centre, nor borders and which is in decline. Laponce insists on the link between language vitality, territory and secure borders.

The territoriality principle can give the impression of monolingual entities for its residents, even in bilingual cantons, through the establishment of parallel infrastructures to cater for the various linguistic groups under their administration. Cichon and Kremnitz (1996: 143) in their perceptive analysis of the Swiss situation illustrate this monolingual system with the example of the Lycée of Bienne, which has two separate buildings: one for the Schwyzertütsh speakers and the other one for the French-speaking Swiss students. The town's sports centres also have two linguistically separate sections. For them, "[t]he application of the *territoriality principle*...rests upon the will to avoid the creation of mixed linguistic zones where possible and to minimize the risk for potential interethnic tensions to emerge"¹⁹ (*my translation emphasis original* 133).

"Belgium and Switzerland are clear illustrations of societal bilingualism based on the principle of territorial unilingualism" (Mackey [1976] cited in Baetens Beardsmore, 1995: 5), this is also called "twinning unilingualism" by Edwards (2004: 21). In other words, a state can operate multilingually with policies and institutions developed to cater for its inhabitants speaking various official languages, but acting within a monolingual framework.

4.1.2 Finland

Contrary to the territoriality principle, the personality principle respects the bilingual character of a specific area, by allowing its inhabitants to use either language. It has been applied in Finland since 1919. A constitutional act established equality between the two

¹⁹ "L'application du *principe de territorialité*...repose sur la volonté d'éviter, dans la mesure du possible, la formation de zones linguistiques mixtes et de minimiser ainsi le risque de formation d'éventuels terrains de tensions interethniques".

national languages, Finnish and Swedish. This legislation regulates linguistic conflicts and allows for social mobility, protects the statutory rights of minorities and prevents Swedish from becoming confined to the home. Swedish is a legitimate language with official provisions for its speakers; for instance, universities in Finland have to abide by the law stipulating a fixed number of professorships in Swedish and any student has the right to use Swedish during exams.

However, there are restrictions with regard to the implementation of this principle. A town is accorded bilingual status when at least 3000 or 8% of its inhabitants are Swedish-speaking, but if the Swedish-speaking population falls under 6%, then the town reverts back to a monolingual Finnish status and vice et versa for the Finnish-speaking minority. At present, despite its decline, Swedish is not in an endangered position partly thanks to the facilitating legislation, but one also has to remember the high status Swedish carried till recently in Finland, due to historical factors relating to Swedes' domination. So, the personality principle represents a more open-boundary model than the territoriality principle, although a certain number or percentage of speakers have to inhabit the geographical area.

4.1.3 Catalonia

Normalization with a linguistic and sociolinguistic objective has been underway in Catalonia since the 20th century. Its aim consists in reorganizing the linguistic conventions within Catalonia, thereby reinstating the social functions of Catalan along with its ability to adapt to changing external conditions. The main idea is to establish a non-diglossic bilingualism or a neutral bilingualism with everybody fully bilingual (high and low variety) in order to prevent Catalan, in a diglossic position, from being gradually replaced by Castilian (Boyer, 1991).

The Catalan language now has majority language status within Catalonia guaranteed by the 2006 Statute (Vila I Moreno, 2008: 165). This supportive legislation reinforced historic and social dimensions, which led to the success of the Catalan language within Spain. The political rejection of the Francoist regime played a major part in keeping Catalan people loyal to their language and to their fully developed literature (Boyer and Lamuela, 1996). Their collective resistance to dictatorship set off severe repression but reasserted at the same time a sense of togetherness, especially as Catalonia was associated with economic

growth. It offered the opportunity for its people to fulfil their expectations and as a result, it did not suffer from emigration. Language has played an important role in the building of collective identity. During the political reorganization, the middle-classes, alarmed to see the end of their privileges, argued for the need to speak Catalan. They transformed the economic rationale of shifting towards Spain's Castilian-speaking centre into a cultural struggle in favour of Barcelona and Catalan in order to secure support from the working-classes (Laitin, 1992), thereby associating social success with the Catalan language (Paulston, 1987: 52). This example shows that pride, confidence, economic stability, financial security and a well-established middle-class stratum are crucial factors for language maintenance. It also demonstrates that effective language policies need a strong grassroots support.

4.1.4 Quebec

The situation in Quebec can also be understood through the desire of the *Québécois* to secure their social future by establishing a separate state (or at present province) from the Canadian state.

The number of French-speaking Canadians was in decline in the 50's and 60's mainly due to the economic supremacy of English, which provided social mobility. However, a sequence of favourable turns of events occurred at the right moment benefiting the French-speaking middle-classes, when the economic centre of the city Quebec was transferred to Ottawa, leaving high status vacancies to be filled. They became more confident and felt they had to protect their newly established privileges by reinventing nationalism as territorial nationalism through the creation of a collective identity.²⁰ Bill 101 was the result and Heller (1999b) skilfully shows how language is used to protect economic mobility. "For a piece of legislation which is actually about economic mobility first and political power second it is not phrased at all in those terms. Instead, it is presented as a piece of legislation which is about language" (155). She adds that the "focus on language serves to legitimize economic and political goals" (155). The Quebec administration still adopts a defensive position on all matters; the question of borders and frontiers is always a

²⁰ "It is the presence of a perceived inequality of social status, and unequal access to economic rewards or political power due to language use which is crucial for the politicization of language use and its degeneration into conflict (Beer and Jacob, 1985: 3).

contentious issue because the Quebec government wishes to avoid appearing ethnically grounded and at the same time, its aim is for Quebec to persist as an identifiable group.

These few examples show that successful language implementations are carried through as long as they tally with strong historic factors, ethnic activism and status demands endorsed by all strata of the population. This success is not replicated with the Celtic languages.

4.2 Some endangered languages: the Celtic languages

During the 20th century, the Celtic languages Irish, Welsh, Gaelic and Breton have experienced a massive reduction in their number of speakers. Particular conditions of rurality associated with poverty and the move towards ever greater globalization have encouraged people to switch to majority languages, phasing out minority monolingualism to embrace bilingualism at first, then moving on to majority monolingualism for most of the population within all these areas. Therefore, the consensual diglossic bilingualism that prevailed until the 20th century is presently in danger of extinction (see for example: Hindley, 1990; Edwards, 1994; Romaine, 2000).

With the development of language consciousness and preservation of a linguistic heritage, official measures have been put in place to facilitate and promote their use. Dorian (1999) spoke of “a real turnaround in Scottish attitudes towards Gaelic” (35) and this comment can be generalized to all the Celtic languages with some researchers speaking of a ‘revival’. Nowadays, the Celtic languages enjoy a positive image (Hoaré, 1999; Corson, 2003; Spolsky, 2004; Boudic, n.d.) and many people express their interest in learning one of the Celtic languages (Wmffre, 2004).

This section will outline the situation of the four Celtic languages mentioned above. This includes retracing a short history of the decline, examining the number of speakers, identifying the newly implemented policies and the issues arising from them.

4.2.1 The Irish language situation

4.2.1.1 Irish and legislation

Soon after independence from Britain in 1922, the Republic of Ireland promoted and financially assisted the Irish language. Among other measures, Irish was made a compulsory subject at school and Irish broadcasts were introduced on the national radio. In 1926, the Irish-speaking counties, geographically not interconnected, were officially recognized and benefited from measures like the *Deontas* (now called *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge* or Irish-Speaking Scheme), grant packages, economic incentives and Irish-medium education. In 2003, with the Official Languages Act 2003, Irish became the national and first official language of the Republic of Ireland. Since 2007, it has been recognized as an official and working language of the EU.²¹

The Official Languages Act 2003 ensured that Irish was officially supported by a raft of language planning policies, orchestrated since 1975 by *Bord na Gaeilge*, which latterly became a cross-border language body (*Foras na Gaeilge*) and implemented through numerous voluntary organizations. These policies aimed to increase the knowledge of Irish following the guidelines of the Action Plan for Irish in agreement with the governmental body, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

In 1973, with the help of state funding, parents chose to set up their own Irish schools (*gaelscoileanna*) and Irish-medium preschools (*naiscoileanna*, called today *naíonraí*). Ever since, this “new, grassroots movement for Irish-medium education has developed, and this has brought about a new wave of energy and innovation” (McLeod, 2003a: 17).

Currently, 25,800 children outside the Gaeltacht and 9,000 in the Gaeltacht receive their primary education through the medium of Irish, which represents 7.4% of all pupils (Wapedia, 2010). Figure 1 below shows the constant growth of Irish-medium education outside the Gaeltacht.

²¹ “For practical reasons, the Council decided that only **regulations adopted by the European Parliament and the Council under the co-decision procedure** will have to be available in Irish” (*emphasis original*, European Commission, 2006).

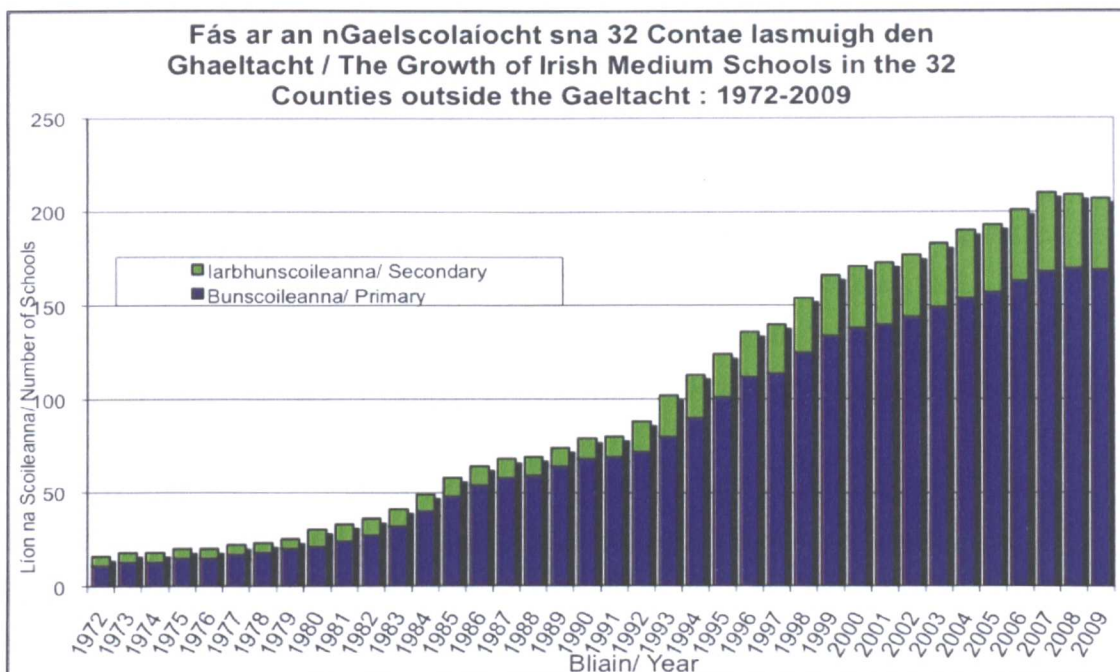


Figure 1: The growth of Irish-medium schools
(*Gaelscoileanna Teo*, 2010).

4.2.1.2 The figures and the issues arising

The 2006 census (Central Statistics Office, 2007: 29) reported that 40.8% (1.66 million) of the population in Ireland could speak Irish with 29.3% (485,000) speaking it daily, a figure rising to 57% in the official Gaeltacht. These statistics represent higher figures than in 2002 (Central Statistics Office, March 2004). In fact, the number of people with ability in Irish has consistently increased since the 1901 census, which documented this ability at 14.4% of the population.

With such a comfortable rise (threefold) it seems paradoxical that so many researchers should worry about the future of the Irish language (Fennell, 1981; Hindley, 1990; Edwards, 1994; Ó Riagáin, 1997; Romaine, 2000; Mac Donnacha *et al*, 2005; Harris, 2006; Ó Giollagáin *et al*, 2007). Dorian (1987) dismissed “the Irish experiment in language maintenance and revival as an appalling waste of money and a colossal failure” (65).

First of all, the censuses are not deemed to be trustworthy. Hindley (1990) is very clear when he speaks of “their generally accepted unreliability” (23) and attributes “[t]he inflation of the language figures...to the work of the Gaelic League and the entire language revival movement” (23). In fact, Irish came to symbolize the free nation and since

independence, it has repeatedly been used in decolonizing discourse and also in cultural and rights discourse (O'Reilly, 1999).

By the time of the Irish independence, the shift from Irish to English was already firmly established (Hindley, 1990: 12; Zwickl, 2002) with a few bilingual areas situated in the west of Ireland, unconnected geographically. Ó Riagáin (2001: 195) reports that a rereading of the 1926 census showed that in reality, only 3% of the total Irish population could speak Irish, although the official estimate was 19.3% (Central Statistics Office, 1996).

The other reservation is that people with Irish ability are not necessarily active users of the language. More realistic figures relating to language use have been issued by governmental bodies: the Central Statistics Office (2008) quoted the figure of 72,148 daily speakers of Irish and in 2006, the Irish government (Government of Ireland, 2006: 10) indicated that only 3% of the country's population (around 15,000) used Irish as their main community and household language. Hindley (1990: 251) estimated this figure to be even lower, at 8751.²² Research by Ní Bhrádaigh *et al* (2007) confirmed the severe decline of the number of Irish speakers; it mapped the present number of Irish speakers and compared it with their number in 1926 (104, 102). The UNESCO atlas classified Irish as 'definitely endangered' and estimated the number of Irish speakers living in Gaeltacht areas at 44,000 (UNESCO, 2010c).

Beside the dismal statistics concerning the active use of Irish and its geolinguistic fragmentation, a conflicting situation exists between users of standard Irish, mainly middle-class urbanites, and the dialect speakers living in the remote Gaeltachtaí (Hindley, 1990: 211). The class element is confirmed by Ó Riagáin (1997, 2001, 2008) who found that "[o]utside of Gaeltacht areas, persons with high levels of ability in Irish are more likely to be found in the upper-classes" (1997: 238). The strong correlation between the high occupational status of people and knowledge of Irish was also highlighted by the Central Statistics Office (2004a; 2004b: 30), (see also Romaine, 1995: 29).

²² Ó Murchú (2008) believed that 5% of the Irish population have a "high active competence" (7). Coady and Ó Laoire (2002: 156) mentioned that 5% in the population of Ireland are native speakers of Irish and use it daily.

Division along geographic, social and economic lines also follows the variety of spoken Irish. “Critical observers see many modern Irish utterances as relexified English, speakers neglecting the unique syntactical structures of authentic Irish” (Görlach, 2000: 19), when they use “the ‘artificial’, standardized, and orthographically ‘reformed’ Irish” (Hindley, 1990: 41), also called ‘book Irish’. Edwards (1985) commented that “the speech of many Gaelic Leaguers fell curiously on the ears of Gaeltacht inhabitants” (64), (see also Fennell, 1981).

For these reasons and the small number of regular and/or fluent secondary Irish speakers, one needs to dampen down the importance of Irish-speaking outside the Gaeltacht. First, it should be remembered that 80% of the population feel indifferent towards Irish (Hindley, 1990: 148). This lack of motivation or interest to learn Irish demonstrates that few people take up the challenge of using it as their main language. For instance, Betts (cited in Hindley, 1990) calculated that only “200 to 300 Dublin families were bringing up their children Irish-speaking, i.e. 0.5% of the city population” (145). Second, the “Irish-speaking networks [are] characterized by a marked degree of impermanence, openness and instability” (Ó Riagáin, 2008: 60), (see also Ó Tuathaigh, 2008: 41). These networks and the numbers involved lack the necessary critical mass of 80% Irish speakers for language maintenance in an area put forward by CILAR²³ (Watson, 1996: 259). In recent research, Ó Giollagáin *et al* (2007: 10) suggested the threshold of 67% of active, integrated Irish speakers in a community was needed for Irish to be sustained.

Moreover, Walsh (2006) found that intergenerational language transmission of Irish is “in a state of collapse” (267). Even when both parents had the Irish linguistic resources to bring up their children through the language, many still switched to English within the home (Ó Riagáin, 1997: 134, 141). This disruption in language transmission in the Gaeltacht was also reported by Ó hIfearnáin (2007). Ó Giollagáin *et al* (2007) reported that in the most Irish-speaking parts of the Gaeltacht, “without a major change to language-use patterns, Irish is unlikely to remain the predominant community and family language...for more than another fifteen to twenty years” (27). This was also the conclusion of Ó Riagáin *et al* (2008) from their analysis of language use among teenagers.

²³ Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research.

Another unpromising element is that Irish production depends mostly on “the school system rather than on the family or community” (Watson, 1996: 258). This weakness has been identified by the Central Statistics Office (2004a); it reported the low usage of Irish among the population aged over 20. Among those who knew Irish, 87.2% reported they seldom or never spoke it. In fact, most reported users (76.8%) were still at school, a phenomenon identified by Hindley (1990) as the “school-age bulge” (27).²⁴

The difficulty resides in turning those with ability in Irish into Irish speakers after they leave school. This issue has been highlighted by numerous researchers (Mac Donnacha *et al*, 2005: 16; Ó Giollagáin *et al*, 2007: 29; Harris, 2006: 8; 157). Ó Giollagáin *et al* (2007) asserted that schools in the Gaeltacht, despite recording high attainment in Irish were “not succeeding in providing an effective educational context for the productive social and communal integration of young people as active speakers of Irish” (29). This is due to mixing children of different language backgrounds in the same bilingual class (L1 Irish children with L2).

Worse, this grouping prevents native Irish children using Irish as their social language due to the majority-minority dynamics of language. Ó Giollagáin and Mac Donnacha (2008) believe that this “sociolinguistically mixed educational context is creating a subtractive linguistic dynamic” (117). Equally, Ní Mhóráin (2004) found that in this context, the first language Irish speakers “do not recognize [school Irish] as the language spoken at home but rather as a new (third) language to be learnt and spoken by them in school...[then,]... school Irish takes over and the Irish speakers use their ‘home-Irish’ less and less” (67).

Despite all these issues, there is no sign of a change of policy. Indeed, in the ‘20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language’ (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, February 2009), the Irish government declared that “Irish-medium education [was] a centrepiece of the maintenance of the language and has already achieved notable successes over the years” (20).

In reality and to conclude, the number of first language Irish speakers is still falling, according to the Central Statistics Office (2004a). The Irish state seems to deny the

²⁴ Edwards (1994: 11) regrets the use of children as “digits in the Irish revival statistics”.

sociolinguistic reality of the disappearing Irish vernacular²⁵ and puts its faith in secondary speakers of Irish for language revitalization. Many researchers (Wardhaugh, 1987; Edwards,²⁶ 1985; Hindley, 1990; Romaine, 1995; Ó Riagáin, 1997; Coady and Ó Laoire, 2002; Wright, 2004) have drawn attention to the mainly symbolic and ceremonial function of the Irish language and its revitalization based on ideological reasons. It is possible to wonder along with Wright (2004), whether the Irish arrangement “can remain stable” (46).

The paradox is that Irish as an everyday language of communication by first language speakers is disappearing. However, the number of Irish-medium schools is growing, a sign of strong parental motivation. Those parents who choose a bilingual education for their children are usually highly-motivated and not necessarily linked to the language themselves (Rogers and Ó Riagáin, 2001: 203; McLeod, 2003a: 17; Mac Gabham, 2004: 94; Ó Murchú, 2008: 12). In fact, this group characteristically features a high proportion of middle-class Irish parents. Ó hIfearnáin (2007: 525) found that in the Gaeltacht, 70.5% of people in favour of All-Irish schools were teachers, while people from lower socioeconomic groups, although not against bilingual education, preferred a mainstream education for “utilitarian” purposes (see also Ó Riagáin, 1997: 248-9; Hickey, 1997: 17). Also, Irish-medium schools have a good academic reputation and offer good prospects for the pupils (Cummings, 2008; Borooah *et al*, 2009: 445). In addition, Irish-medium schools provide a convenient way to avoid a challenging immigrant intake (Duncan, 2008).²⁷

These latter points make for a positive evaluation of the schools on the part of the parents, with the consequence that many Irish-medium schools are oversubscribed (Bartley, 2008). These educational factors not necessarily linked to the Irish revitalization need to be considered as part of the decision-making process parents undertake regarding the selection of a school for their children.

²⁵ The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs rejected the recommendations from a study it commissioned (Ó Giollagáin *et al*, 2007), which suggested redrawing the Gaeltacht boundaries in order to implement measures aimed at boosting Irish as a community language (Wikipedia, 2010).

²⁶ For Edwards (1985) the functions of Irish “are either ceremonial or trivial, or exist only in tandem with English” (59-60); “a symbol of cultural distinctiveness” (61).

²⁷ See Willenys (1997) for a similar argument with regard to Dutch immersion schools in French-speaking Belgium (5.3.1.2.2. below).

4.2.2 The Welsh language situation

4.2.2.1 Supportive legislation

The Welsh language enjoys the strongest position of the Celtic languages with 582,368 Welsh speakers or 20.76% of the population in Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2004: 39; 40; Welsh Language Board, 2003).

Welsh is supported by active and favourable legislation; it began in 1942 by the Welsh Courts Act, it was followed up in 1967 by the Welsh Language Act recognizing equal validity between Welsh and English. This support is manifest in the education sector. The Education Reform Act (1988) ruled the integration of Welsh into the education system as a core subject for every child (up to age 14, extended to 16 in 1999). The second Welsh Language Act (1993) granted Welsh equal status with English in terms of provisions and services, an evolution backed and further developed by the devolved National Assembly Government for Wales created in 1997 (Government of Wales Act 1998) with for instance *Iaith Pawb* – National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales (2003). The Welsh government has legislative power for the language (Government of Wales Act 2006) and its aim is to plan “for a truly bilingual nation”; the official status for Welsh and English was announced with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2010, in force 2011 with other key policies ensuring equal status.

Welsh enjoys a raft of proactive interventions implemented by numerous organizations, coordinated by *Fforwm Iaith* (the statutory language planning agency). *Fforwm Iaith* considers carefully ways to embed Welsh within the community so that it remains used as an everyday language, through local organizations providing a framework for reinforcing the use of Welsh (*Mentrau iaith*, see Williams, 2000: 230-5) or with the recent initiative *TWf*, helping parents to support Welsh at home (see V. Edwards and Pritchard Newcombe, 2005). Wales saw the development of new professions like linguistic animateurs and the extension of Welsh use in public bodies and media (S4C and S4Cdigitol). According to Baker (2003), “the language [is as well] becoming increasingly connected with the economy, especially in the context of sustainable development” (97).

Bilingual education is also a priority. Since the first private Welsh-medium primary school opened in 1939 (fully integrated within the state system in 1944), bilingual education has experienced constant growth, with the opening of many more Welsh-medium and bilingual

schools at primary, secondary and at tertiary levels. 22% of primary children and 16% of secondary children receive their education through the medium of Welsh (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). Its rise is perceived as “a central plank in revitalization efforts” (Baker and M. Prys Jones, 2000: 117).

Advances in the legislation supporting the Welsh language have not only reinforced the status of Welsh and stopped its numerical decline, they have also improved the opportunities to use Welsh in every walk of life and encouraged people to develop a full competence in the language.

4.2.2.2 Historical aspects

Welsh appears to be secure despite language neglect and repression comparable with the other Celtic languages, such as its exclusion from the public domains of law and government following the Acts of Union (1536 and 1542) and of education in 1870 with the Elementary Education Act. Its state-orchestrated revitalization process started at a time when around a third of the population could still speak Welsh (32.8%, Census 1931) and the timing of this support is crucial to understanding Welsh language vitality.²⁸ The LPP had a fairly strong linguistic basis to filter down policies to assist Welsh vitality. Welsh language maintenance was, however, not guaranteed, but its present situation can be attributed to several factors and it is these that will be briefly examined below.²⁹

To start with, the early translation of the Bible in Welsh (1588) had a standardizing effect on the language (Wardhaugh, 1987: 81; Jones and Singh, 2005: 102; Ferguson, 2006: 88). It was first through the religious channel that the high register of Welsh was disseminated reinforcing its prestige as a written medium. At the end of the 19th century, “a viable press flourished. There were twenty Welsh-language weeklies” (Lewis Jones, 1990: 43).

Secondly, until the middle of the 20th century, the industries of coal, iron, slate and lead provided sufficient work, therefore preventing local people from emigrating.³⁰ This economic factor, although a positive element at first, backfired and proved to be “a mixed

²⁸ This is also a point made by Ferguson (2006:107) when comparing the situations of Welsh and Breton.

²⁹ For a detailed analysis of those factors, which influenced the sociolinguistic pattern of Welsh, see Williams (2000: 15-34).

³⁰ There were two periods of Welsh emigration which resulted in rural depopulation; English industrialization and during the 1920s depression (Coulmas, 1992: 179).

blessing” (Wardhaugh, 1987: 82). Prosperity brought an improved infrastructure to the area, which subsequently attracted English in-migration, shifting the balance of the language through intermarriages and bilingualism, with English enabling greater mobility (Hindley, 1990: 225-4). During this period, Wales faced a severe reduction of Welsh speakers, dropping from an 80% Welsh Wales to just over half of the population speaking the language.

Thirdly, the early introduction of Welsh in school (1882) at first “to support the teaching of English” (Wardhaugh, 1987: 81), then in 1907 as an optional subject in primary and secondary schools (Grillo, 1989: 102). Slowly, from this position, Welsh became the medium of instruction, gradually introducing the notion of bilingualism in schools (Durkacz, 1983: 181; see also D.V. Jones and Martin-Jones, 2004 for an analysis of bilingual education throughout the legislation changes).

4.2.2.3 Issues arising

Recent statutory directives push ahead for a truly, institutional bilingual Wales. However, this official backing and the apparent reversal of language shift cannot hide the fact that Welsh has experienced a drastic reduction in its number of speakers since the end of the 19th century (in 1891, 54% were Welsh monoglots and in 2001, 20.76% were Welsh bilinguals). For the moment, Welsh is considered ‘vulnerable’ (UNESCO, 2010c).

There is another crucial factor, which should receive particular attention. Whilst the number of Welsh speakers is rising in anglicized Wales,³¹ it is important to highlight that it is still declining in its traditional strongholds in the South-West and the North of Wales. Each census shows the “zone of collapse” (Ambrose and Williams, 1990: 57) of Welsh speakers moving westwards. These territorial contractions and fragmentations have been studied by Thomas and Williams (1978), Baker (1985), Ambrose and Williams (1990), Aitchison and Carter (2000), Cole and Williams (2004) and Cartwright (2006). The territorial retreat of Welsh in its recognized core areas is a persistent feature of each survey, showing the Welsh heartland getting smaller. It “shows no sign of abating” (H.M. Jones, 2008).

³¹ In Cardiff alone, “[b]etween 1951 and 1991 the number of Welsh-speakers...rose from 9,623 to 17,236, an increase of 79%” (Davies, 2000: 96).

The loss of Welsh native speakers from the heartland owing to a lack of intergenerational transmission and an ageing population is compensated for mostly by learners living in anglicized urban areas³² (Aitchison and Carter, 2000: 139). It is now more appropriate to speak of “Welsh speakers in the community” than of a “Welsh-speaking community” (Williams, 1989: 44). Williams interpreted this eastward and southward Welsh language repositioning as “a new geographic reality for stable bilingualism, particularly in anglicized areas” [where] “[n]ew channels for the reproduction of the language/culture are being created” (44).

However, this shift has negative consequences for the density or concentration of speakers in the community, a key element in successful language maintenance through intergenerational language transmission. Hence, a few years later (2004) the same author, along with Cole, adopted a more cautious approach regarding the vitality of Welsh: “[m]any communities of the northern and western heartland seem to be fragmenting irretrievably, threatening the transmission of the Welsh language” (560).

The development of Welsh within the school system has indubitably a positive impact on the language for many reasons including cultural, attitudinal, linguistic, geolinguistic spread and instrumental, and this is particularly true of Welsh-medium schools. D.V. Jones and Martin-Jones (2004) attributed the rise of Welsh-medium schools for parents unconnected to Welsh to a “reassessment of the instrumental value of Welsh” (49) (see also Baker and M. Prys Jones, 2000: 120). As for McLeod (2003a), he interpreted the development of Welsh-medium schools “in urban areas where Welsh was not widely used at community level...[as] reflecting the commitment of parents to transmit and maintain Welsh in all parts of Wales” (18).

At the same time, Cole and Williams (2004) noted that the education system had become the main “means by which most Welsh speakers gain access to the language, rather than the home or the community” (560). Indeed, only 26% of children aged 3-15 learnt Welsh at home (see the figure below).³³ This pattern is more pronounced the younger the generation (see also H.M. Jones and Williams, 2000: 52; 54 and H.M. Jones’s figure

³² In an earlier article, Aitchison and Carter (1987) compared this geolinguistic redistribution to a “quiet middle-class revolution” (492).

³³ Hindley (1990) reckons this figure to be higher. For him, “[i]t is unlikely that as many as 10 percent of children in Wales speak Welsh as their mother tongue” (222).

illustrating the impact of compulsory teaching of Welsh on the ability of the 3-15, 2008: 549).

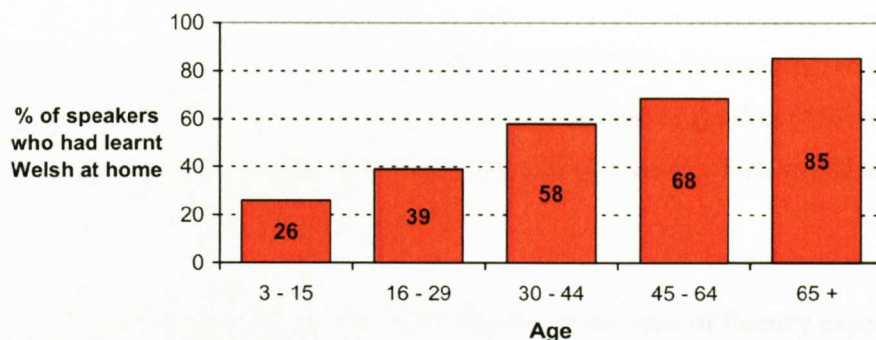


Figure 2: Welsh acquisition: percentage of speakers who learnt Welsh at home, by age (Welsh Language Board, 2008: 32)

Natural agencies of language reproduction (family and community) have receded and now the acquisition of Welsh is mainly achieved through schools. There are several issues attached to this change, relating to the integration of learners into Welsh-speaking communities, the intergenerational language transmission of Welsh, fluency and language use in a secondary language.

First, the number of “serious learners are rare” (Trosset, 1986: 170), (see also Clayton, 1978: 214-5; Gunther, 1990: 64). H.M. Jones (2008) confirms that few learners reach a reasonable level of fluency (550) although he found that living in an area with solid linguistic foundations improved Welsh competence (552). Nonetheless, some researchers have noted that even in strong Welsh-speaking communities, the integration of secondary Welsh speakers was not effective or proved difficult (Trosset, 1986; Bowie, 1993: 175-85; Aitchison and Carter, 2000: 78-80; Evas, 2000: 303; Williams, 2000: 229).

Secondly, a number of researchers have identified the rise in the parental interest in Welsh-medium schools as being socially motivated (representing an educational opportunity to ensure social mobility) rather than being linguistically induced (see G.Williams, Roberts and Isaac, 1978: 194-204; Kleif, 1980: 205-13; Cummins and Genesee, 1985: 40; Williams, 1987: 76, 91; Ó Riagáin *et al*, 2008: 7). This aspect concerning the social background of children seems to have been put aside for the moment and some researchers have come out against the elitist argument (Gruffud, 2000: 199), arguing that Welsh bilingual schools are “championed as models of good educational practice...in preparing

citizens to participate fully within a bilingual democracy and a multicultural European Union” (G.E. Jones and Williams, 2000: 138-9).

On parental choice, D.V. Jones and Martin-Jones (2004: 55) have raised concerns regarding the increasing number of pupils who are native speaker of Welsh and whose parents have opted for English-medium schooling, a trend which would have damaging implications for language maintenance.

Often, a school-learnt language does not provide the type of fluency expected regarding the variety of Welsh and the interpersonal use of the language. Ferguson (2006) points out that the fluency of school learners is limited and that their variety of Welsh is a “school dialect” (102), a form of “modern Welsh”...“a more uniform type of speech throughout Wales”³⁴ (M.C. Jones, 1998a: 76, 104; see also G. Williams, 1987: 96; H.M. Jones and Williams, 2000: 52-3). Moreover, Baker (2003: 100) draws attention to the drop-out rate of children (40%) who do not continue their Welsh-medium education from primary to secondary with Welsh becoming only a school subject.

Another issue following the introduction of Welsh as a core subject is for the young cohort with Welsh ability to turn into regular Welsh speakers. In fact, Welsh often tends to remain a school language with children scoring low in oral tests and reverting to English as soon as they are removed from the Welsh teacher’s influence (Price, 1985: 92, 123, 124; see also Abley, 2003: 68, 247).

Aitchison and Carter (2000) highlighted that the anglicized areas were the most challenging “for school leavers to maintain their fluency” (140) and warned that in the Cardiff area “the home foundation on which the Welsh-medium schools are seeking to build is not very deep or very strong” (86). Moreover, the social use of the language made by the pupils was found to be “very limited and seemingly superficial...in the playground and in [their] wider social arena” (86). These remarks also applied to their parents. They also mentioned the “serious weakness” (140) of language reproduction within the home (132).

³⁴ For M.C. Jones (1998a), “the loss of dialect features [occur] in the wake of the spread of standard welsh” (104) and can bring benefit. She believes it is neutral enough to satisfy the dialect speakers and it will also prevent any further dialect fragmentation (see also M.C. Jones (1998c)).

An in-depth analysis of recent surveys carried out by H.M. Jones (2008) showed that despite the rise in the actual number of people with Welsh ability, there is “monotonic downward trend” (545) with respect to the number of Welsh-speaking households. This is particularly noticeable among younger couples, a source of explanation as to why the intergenerational language transmission is still falling combined with a drop in language use at home among the young cohort (549).

This lack of interpersonal use of Welsh has also been reported by Ó Riagáin *et al* (2008) in their analysis of language use among Welsh teenagers. In their research, they established that the language use of the parents influenced considerably the pattern of usage among teenagers and more generally that the home language was “a core factor in every context” (14). This was also found by Gruffudd (2000: 184-5) who noticed that teenagers tended to copy the household language pattern. These findings were acknowledged by the Centre for European Research Wales and Cwmni Iaith ([2006: iv-v] cited in H.M. Jones, 2008: 554).

As noted above, the school acquisition of a language is not necessarily a gauge for the subsequent active use of the language. The Welsh Language Use Surveys of 2004-06 (Welsh Language Board, 2008) tend to support the assertion that the older the people in Wales, the more Welsh they tend to use with their neighbours and friends (45) and less Welsh with managers at work, whereas the exact opposite trend is true for the young employees (50). It appears that Welsh retracted from the familial and social networks, but experienced a development into more formal domains (school, work and public services), an observation also made by Lewis Jones (1990: 49).³⁵

So, throughout the 20th century, the Welsh language lost nearly half of its speakers. Although the number of speakers today has stabilized and has experienced a modest increase, the analysis of the Welsh language situation appears confusing. The number of Welsh people with ability has sharply risen, however, the overall fluency of Welsh speakers has dropped (Welsh Language Board, 2008: 8) and the Welsh heartlands “are increasingly caught up in a tide of anglicization” (D.V. Jones and Martin-Jones, 2004: 55) impacting negatively on key areas fostering language maintenance.

³⁵ “Welsh has been introduced into some domains from which it used to be excluded...Within the classroom its place has been extended. But elsewhere in the neighbourhood and in social interactions, its previous dominance is weakened”.

Therefore, despite state interventionism with active language planning policies and the language's official status, it is justified to wonder if this rise corresponds to a transient trend indicating a superficial bilingualism, equivalent to the school-bulge observed with Irish. To conclude, it is clear that Welsh is not secure as a community language and "[i]t would be false to say that Welsh is not today in serious jeopardy" (Wardhaugh, 1987: 85).³⁶

4.2.3 The Gaelic language situation

4.2.3.1 Legislation and language situation

Gaelic has also recently benefited from institutional measures put in place by the Scottish Executive and Government (since 2007). The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 has been "modelled to a considerable extent on the Welsh Language Act 1993 [and it represents to date] the single most important piece of legislation in respect of the language" (Dunbar, 2006: 17). In 2006, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, a statutory non-departmental public body became responsible for promoting Gaelic and Gaelic culture, monitoring its development and the allocation of funds, advising public authorities and other bodies as well as reporting to the Scottish government. Its remits include the submission of a National Language Plan, revisited every five years. In this way, Gaelic will benefit from a coordinated national strategy with national targets. Parts of this plan also include the extension of media and public services in Gaelic (previously coming under the Broadcasting Act 1996) and an increase in the provision of Gaelic-medium education (GME).

The statutory support for the Gaelic language and its increased presence in public bodies represent a positive step in language maintenance policy, although Gaelic is still considered to be 'definitely endangered' (UNESCO, 2010c). The 2001 census (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005a) recorded 58,652 Gaelic speakers or 1.2% of the Scottish population. The traditional Gaelic-speaking heartlands are mainly located in the Highland territory, although 45% of Gaelic speakers live outside that area.³⁷ The Western Isles in particular, showed the highest percentage of people with some Gaelic ability, at 70%. At the same time, the census highlighted that this Island Authority had lost in the

³⁶ Lewis Jones (1990: 50) predicts a grim outlook.

³⁷ The 'Gaelic ghettos' found previously in cities (Dunbar, 2006: 3) no longer exist.

space of 10 years 19.6% of its Gaelic speakers (MacKinnon, 2004a: 24), reducing the proportion of speakers to 59.66% (Dunbar, 2006). The General Register Office for Scotland (2005a) also drew attention to the “dramatic drop of 53% in the number of 15-24 year old speakers” (6). Figures for the Highlands are of a similar order with a drop of 18% of all its Gaelic speakers.

The Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – CnES (previously the Western Isles Island Authority) is addressing the issue of this decline and it has since drawn a ‘Gaelic Language Plan 2007-12’ (CnES, 2005) with the aim of strengthening Gaelic use in the family and community and of increasing the number of Gaelic speakers in the Islands. Recent developments include the CnES intention to introduce a policy of GME as a mainstream primary provision (Scottish Government, 2009).

4.2.3.2 The decline of Gaelic

Gaelic started its retreat from the Lowlands as early as the 13th century, when it lost its social dominance, soon after English had come to be associated with the ruling power (Wardhaugh, 1987: 86; Dorian, 1981: 16). Over the following centuries, the gradual cultural and economic transformation of the Highland territory into a Scottish and then British state was done through English (Withers, 1988). This economic integration mirrors the decline of the Gaelic language, which retreated to the peripheral areas of Scotland and was not used at institutional level apart from worship.

“Scotland arguably did not aim directly at eliminating autochthonous languages, but rather at equipping the speakers of such languages with standard English” (Dunbar, 2003: 140). This bilingualization occurred alongside other events, which had a negative impact on Gaelic language maintenance; the Clearances and subsequent poverty drove many Gaelic speakers to emigrate to the Lowlands of Scotland or abroad, leaving behind a mainly poor and rural Gaelic-speaking population.³⁸

These historical factors caused the Gaelic language to be associated with poverty and until recently, “[t]he connection between membership in the working-classes and the use of Gaelic...remained strong. As English pressed in from the top of the social hierarchy and

³⁸ For detail on history, see Durkacz (1983), Smout (1986), Withers (1988) and Devine (1999).

spread steadily downward, Gaelic retreated to the bottom of the social hierarchy” (Dorian, 1981: 53). The link between the knowledge of Gaelic and the less qualified part of the population in Gaelic-speaking areas was again highlighted in the latest census (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005a: 22).

In the CnES, despite the rising number of children in GME, the total figure for Gaelic speakers aged 3-15 is following a downward trend; in 1981, they were 68%, then 49% in 1991 and 46.3% in 2001 (figures from censuses (1981, 1991 and 2001) cited by Morrison, 2006: 141). This regression in language use across the generations in the Western Isles and particularly among the children has been investigated by MacKinnon (1998; 2006a: 55-62; 2006b: 3). Inquiries have shown the weakening of Gaelic use within the community, examples being the SCRE Report (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1961) and Mackinnon (1977). In a comparative exercise, Mackinnon (1977) showed that between the SCRE study conducted in 1957-58 (1961:40) and his own in 1972-3, the level of Gaelic as an active first language in a primary school (P1 and P2) in Harris had dropped from 91.8% to 66.3% (1977: 90). These two inquiries revealed that Gaelic was gradually retreating to being used mainly at home with older generations; its decline was general and it was especially salient within the children’s peer-group (between brothers and sisters and in the playground). In 1957-58, 83.2% of the native speakers (1961:41) spoke Gaelic in the playground, whereas by 1972-3, only 17.2% (1977:92) did so.

All of these observations on the decline of Gaelic use point towards “rapid sequential intergenerational decline” (MacKinnon, 2006a: 51). They reflect the wider picture of the erosion of Gaelic used as an everyday language within families and communities and the end of language assimilation through the community. For the Scottish Council for Research in Education (1961), “[t]hroughout the bilingual area the process of anglicization [could] be seen at various stages” (46). Durkacz (1983: 216) and MacKinnon (2004b) referred to the common pattern of a language shift to English occurring over three generations: the grandparents are more at ease with Gaelic, their children are bilingual and the grandchildren speak only/mainly English.

The latest census figures confirmed the continuing decline of the intergenerational transmission of the Gaelic language. The CnES showed again the highest regression at - 2.98% (MacKinnon, 2004a: 26). Even when both parents were Gaelic speakers the level of transmission in Gaelic-speaking areas reached only 78% (General Register Office for

Scotland, 2005a: 17). The weak transmission for households with one Gaelic speaker (17%) is of great concern for the future of Gaelic as a first language, given that it is the prevailing household configuration (55%) for Gaelic speakers throughout Scotland (McLeod, 2001: 3). Intervention at family level is a difficult issue to address.

So, the gradual retreat of Gaelic still continues further westwards and northwards; from 230,806 Gaelic speakers or 5.57% of the population in 1901 (MacKinnon, 2007) to 58,652 in 2001. However, in the non-traditional Gaelic-speaking areas, Gaelic has recently gained some speakers, especially among the 3-15 year old age group. So far, the revitalization of Gaelic appears to have taken place outside the Gaelic heartlands with learners and school-aged children (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005b).

4.2.3.3 Gaelic and the education system

From 1885, Gaelic became a specific teaching subject. It achieved a statutory role in 1918 when an amendment to the Education (Scotland) Act 1872 (extended 1875) required local authorities to provide some provision for the teaching of Gaelic and adequate provision in Gaelic-speaking areas.

By 1960, the region of Inverness-shire (at the time including also the islands of Skye, Barra, the Uists and Harris) established the Gaelic-education Scheme. Its aim was to provide first language Gaelic pupils with the possibility of using and developing their language within school. In 1975, following a regional reorganization of local authorities, the then Western Isles Council (including all of the Outer-Hebridian islands) adopted a bilingual project for schools introducing Gaelic as a medium alongside English. Its aim was to recognize the broader language environment of the pupils beyond the classroom. But this policy was not “as assiduously or widely implemented as was originally envisaged” (Robertson, 2001: 87).

In 1980, the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 made compulsory the provision of the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas. At that point, there was a move from a bilingual project involving the whole community to the provision of specialized bilingual schools with immersive Gaelic teaching. Parents organized themselves into associations (*Comunn na Gàidhlig* – CnaG: Gaelic Development Agency and *Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Àraich* –

CNSA: Gaelic Playgroup Association, now known as TAIC³⁹) and they set up Gaelic-medium preschools based on the Welsh-medium model, with the first two Gaelic-medium primary units opening in 1985 in Glasgow and Inverness. Under the Gaelic Language Education (Scotland) Regulations 1986, the state provided a system of grants to local authorities to fund GME.⁴⁰ GME is fully integrated within the state system and must follow national educational guidelines (i.e. ‘5-14 Curriculum Guidelines’ and ‘Curriculum for Excellence 3-18’).

Since 1980, the number of children attending GME has grown exponentially (see Figure 3). This growth can largely be credited to parental power” (Ward, 2003: 45) and their “lobbying” capacities (Nisbet, 2003: 49). Local authorities have to open Gaelic-medium units (GMU) where there is parental demand. So, with the help of diverse associations (*Comann nam Pàrant* – CnP: Parents' organization, CnaG and CNSA –now TAIC), parents demonstrated to local authorities the need for Gaelic provision.

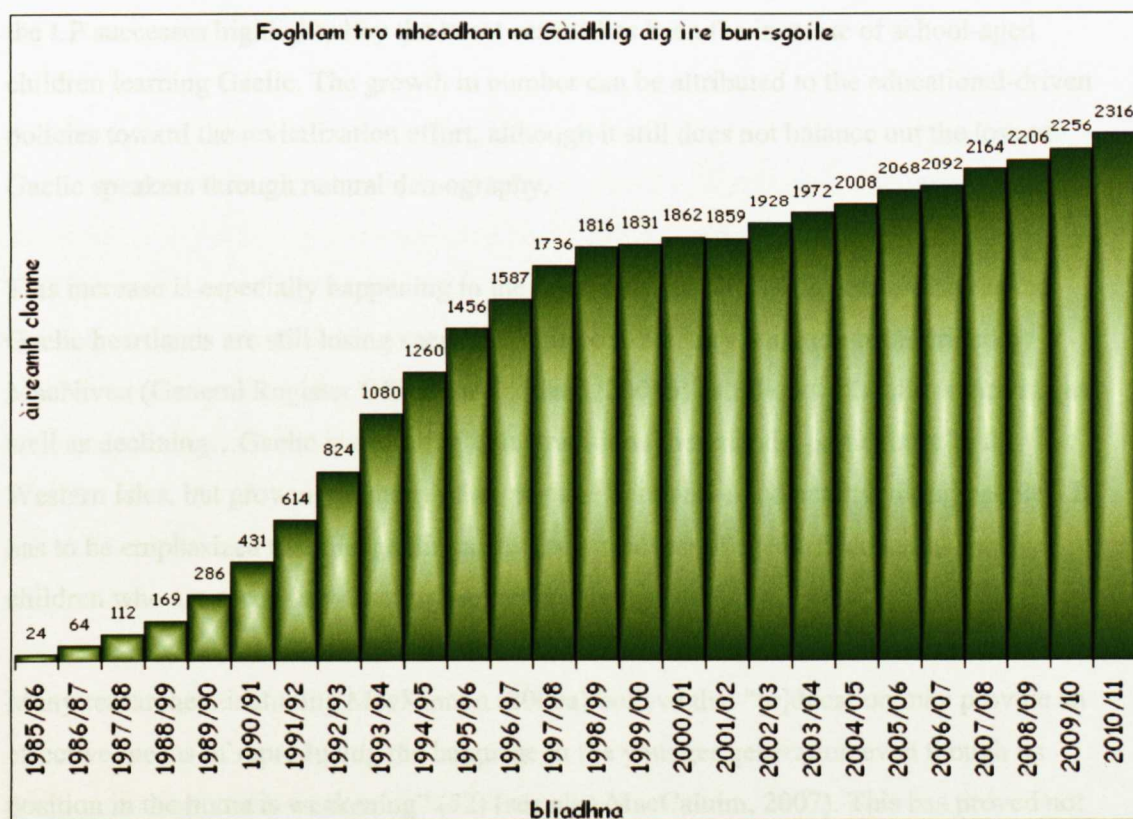


Figure 3: Gaelic-medium primary school education pupil numbers (CnaG, 2012)

³⁹ Gaelic Living Language, Thriving Culture.

⁴⁰ For more information, see McLeod (2003b: 104-31) and MacLeod (2003: 1-14).

The development of schools saw the creation of linked organizations like the resource centre (*Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig*, 1999), Gaelic clubs (*Stradagan*) and the development of electronic resources (to name but a few). Following the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, additional provisions have been allocated to Gaelic education.

In 2010-11, there were 2,722 pupils in Gaelic-medium education (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, n.d.). The provision of Gaelic secondary and tertiary education is improving, although still patchy, which poses problems regarding the continuity of a full education through the medium of Gaelic.⁴¹

4.2.3.4 Issues arising

The aim of LP is to provide access to Gaelic language and culture, to encourage Gaelic speakers to develop and use their language and to increase the number of speakers. One of the LP successes highlighted by the latest census has been the increase of school-aged children learning Gaelic. The growth in number can be attributed to the educational-driven policies toward the revitalization effort, although it still does not balance out the loss of Gaelic speakers through natural demography.

This increase is especially happening in the Lowlands, among urban areas, whereas the Gaelic heartlands are still losing speakers. This contradictory situation is described by MacNiven (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005b) as follows: “Gaelic is thriving as well as declining...Gaelic is declining in its traditional heartlands, particularly in the Western Isles, but growing in many other parts of Scotland – and among young people”. It has to be emphasized that this geolinguistic redistribution of speakers concerns mostly children who are secondary Gaelic speakers receiving GME.

Many researchers including MacKinnon (2006a) believe that “[e]ducation may provide an effective means of reproducing the language in the younger generation even though its position in the home is weakening” (52) (see also MacCaluim, 2007). This has proved not to be necessarily the case. Research found that knowing the language does not necessarily result in its use outside school (MacNeil and Stradling, 2000; MacLeod, 2003; Morrison,

⁴¹ In 2003, only 50% of the primary GME children transferred to a GME secondary (MacKinnon, 2006b). A lower figure is presented by McLeod (2003b: 125).

2004). Müller (2006) found that “only 13.1% of Portree GM-pupils used exclusively Gaelic with their parents” (125). Ward (2006) reports that even when children are fluent Gaelic speakers, their preferred language often remains English in the playground. Overall, interpersonal Gaelic use is also very low among children (Western Isles Language Plan Project, 2005: 21).

Other issues regarding those parents more likely to choose a GME are puzzling; Stockdale *et al* (2003) have observed that it was especially parents with high levels of qualification who selected a Gaelic-medium education (see also MacNeil, 1993: 25). In addition, they noted that “the more Gaelic the area, the less likely children [were] to attend Gaelic-medium” (8). They also commented on the “strong antipathy from first generation non Gaelic-speakers to Gaelic-medium” (9). This pattern was also noted by MacLeod (2003: 12). In Edinburgh, McLeod (2005) found that “86% of the fluent native speakers with children of school age did not have them enrolled in GME” (v). Rogers and McLeod (2006: 367) questioned the reasons why in the Western Isles only 25% of the primary children were enrolled in Gaelic-medium units.

A further point needs to be made regarding the place of Gaelic within Scottish society. Gaelic is not an essential component of Scottish identity (Wardhaugh, 1987: 79; Matheson and Matheson, 1998: 47). It is associated with a cultural and regional part of Scotland. Gaelic is as Barbour (2000) sees it “best viewed as a form of regionalism rather than nationalism” (34). There is indeed no movement linked to a political independence supporting the use of Gaelic in a defined territory; any demand for the maintenance of Gaelic is on a cultural level.

This cultural interest is manifest in the increasing number of adults interested in learning Gaelic. However, this enthusiasm rarely translates into fluency. McLeod (2001: 19) estimated that only around 1500 learners reached fluency in Gaelic; MacCaluim (2007) believed the figure to be “700 fluent learners *in total*” (*emphasis original* 231).

Changes in legislation have resulted in an increased provision for the teaching of Gaelic. These have also had a positive effect on the image of Gaelic resulting in “green shoots” (MacKinnon, 2004a: 27) for the language. All the same, the lack of interaction through Gaelic among the younger generation, added to the falling number of speakers, cannot hide the difficult position the language is in. It is important to remember that language shift

continues to advance, especially in core areas where Gaelic is still used as a community language by first language speakers. “That reduction is a matter of a grave concern, for if Gaelic loses its heartland, its survival elsewhere will be a somewhat artificial one” (MacLeod, 2003: 12).

4.2.4 The Breton language situation

4.2.4.1 Language situation and legislation

In 2007, the number of remaining Breton speakers was estimated at 172,000 with 70% of the speakers older than 60, meaning that each year Breton stands to lose 12,000 speakers (Broudic, n.d., 2009a, 2009b; INSEE,⁴² 2003: 20).⁴³ Breton is classified as ‘severely endangered’ by the UNESCO Atlas (UNESCO, 2010c).

Recently, the French state changed its attitude toward its regional languages and cultures by recognizing their existence at a cultural level. In Brittany, a cultural charter was signed in 1977 between central government and local representatives and it led to the foundation of the Cultural Institute of Brittany. In 2004, the Administrative Authority of Brittany (Conseil régional de Bretagne) officially recognized Breton as being one of the used languages in Brittany alongside French and Gallo. At national level, in 2008, the French legislative body (*Parlement – Sénat and Assemblée Nationale*) also amended the French Constitution. A new article (75-1) stating that regional languages are part of the heritage of France⁴⁴ was added to the French Constitution. This new article is limited in its support for regional languages when compared with the outcome had the ECLRM been ratified. However, the present arrangement does implicitly acknowledge Breton as being officially one of the regional languages of France.

In this new climate, new measures for Breton have been implemented; bilingual education and later a bilingual road sign policy (1985) were instigated. The latest major development is the state-funded Breton language agency, *Ofis Ar Brezhoneg* created in 1999. It is responsible for promoting the use of Breton; it also offers translation services and proposes

⁴² INSEE: *Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques*.

⁴³ Extra and Gorter (2008: 26-28) gave the figure of 160,000 Breton speakers in line with the natural demography change; *Ofis Ar Brezhoneg*’s (2007) estimate was 263,850 and the latest figure on its website is 206,000 (*Ofis Ar Brezhoneg*, n.d.). Cole and Williams (2004: 557) believed that there will be no remaining native Breton speakers in two or three decades.

⁴⁴ *Les langues régionales appartiennent au patrimoine de la France*.

new terminology. Breton cultural creativity and its diffusion have also improved. These advances have increased the presence of Breton in the public sphere and allowed the dissemination of standard Breton to a wider audience, although the presence of Breton is still minimal in the media.

This greater public presence and positive image have had promising results. Numerous adults have started learning Breton and it should be an encouraging sign that the people mostly in favour for the survival of Breton are in a young age group (*Ofis Ar Brezhoneg*, 2003). Hoaré's (1999) research shows that the image of Breton has been transformed among a younger audience. It has become socially acceptable to learn Breton. Most people recognize it as a proper language that can be used outside the privacy of one's home and in 2001, 92% of the Breton population wished it would survive (Broudic, n.d.).

In the education system where it was previously excluded, Breton has also seen advances. It was timidly introduced under restrictive conditions in 1951 (Deixonne Law), extended in 1975 (Haby Law⁴⁵). "This law, for all its novelty was hardly the reflection of an intensive policy designed to reverse the decline of the regional language" (Jacob and Gordon, 1985: 121). In 1981, at university level, a *licence* ('three year degree') in Breton was created and in 1985, the teaching qualification *CAPES* (equivalent to the Postgraduate Certificate of Education – PGCE) became available.

The most significant development was the opening of a privately-funded nursery school in 1977, which used Breton as the medium of education (*Diwan*). Thereafter the *Diwan* primary schools network developed rapidly. To satisfy the increasing demand from parents to enrol their children in *Diwan*, public funds were allocated by the Ministry of Education and in 1994, the state signed a protocol giving *Diwan* the status of 'private school under agreement' (according to the Debré Law). The secondary sector saw a more subdued growth.

In the meantime, starting in 1983, the public sector opened primary bilingual units (*Div Yezh*) with a particular system of teaching; Breton in the morning with a specially-trained teacher, and French in the afternoon delivered by another specialist. Since 1990, following

⁴⁵ This law has been replaced by the Toubon Law in 1994 still in force. This new law reiterates the rules established by the previous laws by stating that the teaching and use of regional languages are authorized (Article 21).

the same model, many Catholic primary schools (*Dihun*) have also opened bilingual units. All of these have seen a remarkable rise in their numbers (see Figure 4).

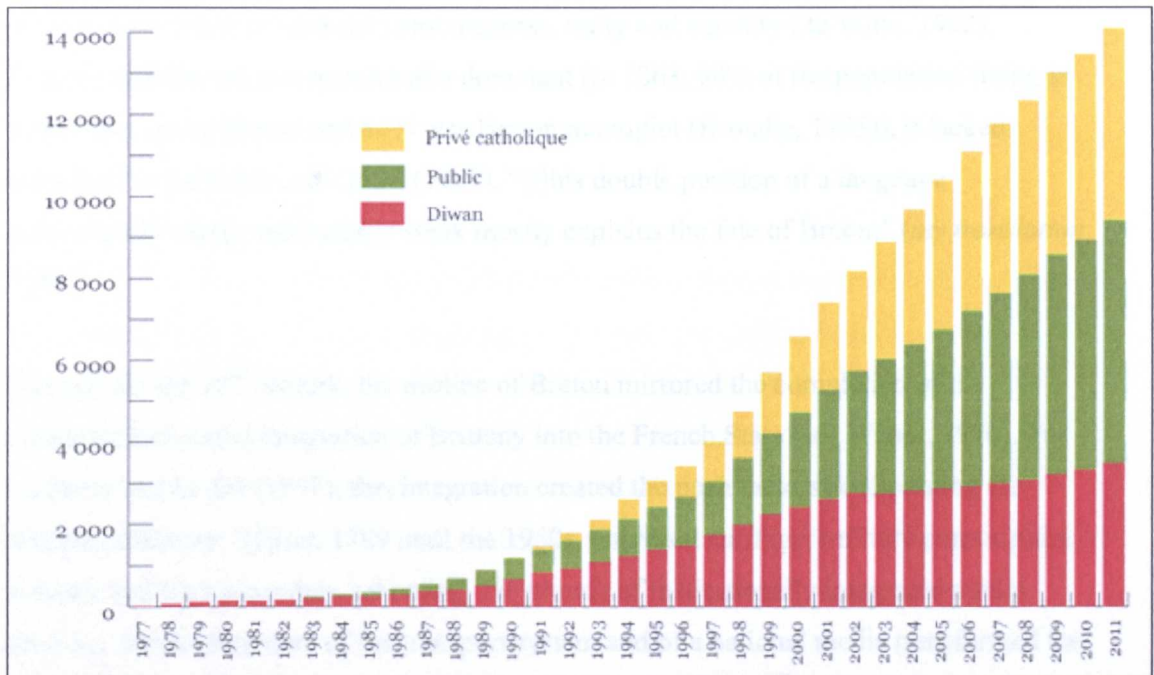


Figure 4: Number of Breton pupils in bilingual primary education (*Ofis Ar Brezhoneg*, 2012)

In 2011, 14,082 children or 1,55 % of all Breton pupils, were learning Breton in a bilingual primary school (*Ofis Ar Brezhoneg*, 2012), while 3,500 adults out of three million inhabitants followed a Breton language course in 2011. These numbers remain very small.

4.2.4.2 The decline of Breton

Breton is divided into four main dialects following historical bishopric divisions and since the 16th century, it has only been historically spoken in the western part of Brittany, called *Breiz Izel*. Breton has been receding westwards from as early as the 10th century in favour of French, spoken by the elite and used as the administrative language (Royal edicts: Ordonnances of Villers-Cotterêts and Lyon in 1539 and 1540).

For centuries, French and Breton⁴⁶ were both in use and specific functions were associated with each language. In the 17th-18th centuries, a high variety of written Breton emerged and was also associated with religious purposes. It functioned as a standard and was used by an

⁴⁶ Latin had still some functions (university and church).

emerging bourgeoisie at a time of economic prosperity. However, it did not replace French or Latin, which were preferred by the Breton elite as the languages of social promotion and intellectual inquiry (Le Berre, 1995). Moreover, with the French Revolution, French became the symbol of national consciousness, unity and equality (de Witte, 1992). Even though Breton was numerically dominant (in 1863, 98% of the population living in *Breizh Izel* spoke Breton and 86% was Breton monoglot (Broudic, 1995)), it lacked prestige. For Le Berre and Le Dû (1997), “[t]his double position of a language symbolically strong and socially weak mostly explains the fate of Breton” (*my translation* 112).⁴⁷

Throughout the 20th century, the decline of Breton mirrored the completion of the economic and social integration of Brittany into the French State (see Weber, 1976). For Le Berre and Le Dû (1997), this integration created the push factors precipitating the decline of Breton: “[f]rom 1789 until the 1950s, universal suffrage, military conscription, primary and later secondary schooling, the growth of institutionally integrated public services, the development of the transport system and of a national media transformed the whole of France into one giant institution”(*my translation* 112).⁴⁸

The erosion of Breton steadily reached every domain of daily life and socioeconomic group. Every register of the Breton repertoire was gradually substituted by its French equivalent, finally spreading to the community sphere, thereby ending the functional distribution of languages expected in a diglossic society. Timm (1980) observed that “in most domains it seems fair to say that Breton is being swamped by French” and that “Breton in Breizh Izel appears to be ‘surviving in islands strung throughout a widening sea of French speakers’” (38, 29).

In the 1950s, the changeover to French became radical within traditional (rurally-based) families. From 1950 to 1990, in *Breizh Izel*, the estimated percentage of Breton speakers fell from 75% to 21% (from 1,100,000 to 250,000) (Broudic, 1995).

⁴⁷ “Cette double position de langue symboliquement forte et socialement faible explique largement le destin ultérieur du breton”.

⁴⁸ “A partir de 1789 et jusque dans les années du gaullisme historique, la mise en place progressive et la généralisation du suffrage universel, de la conscription et de l’instruction primaire, puis secondaire; l’expansion d’une considérable fonction publique liée à des appareils d’Etat entièrement intégrés; le développement des voies de communication, puis des médias nationaux transforment la France entière en une seule institution géante”.

4.2.4.3 The intergenerational language disruption

From the middle of the 20th century, according to a number of studies, the scale and the rapidity of the switch to an all-French upbringing was startling. For instance, in a small Breton township (an inquiry conducted by Elégoët cited in Broudic (1995: 337-8)), over a period of seven years, the percentage of children with Breton as a first language dropped from 100% in 1945-46 to 10% in 1952.

In the 70s, Le Dû (1980: 160) observed that parents had stopped transmitting Breton to their children; they continued to speak Breton to their own parents and elders, but French to their children and youngsters. Favereau (1993: 28-9) also noticed that the intergenerational language transmission of Breton had ended in the space of two generations; grandparents were Breton monolingual, their children bilingual and their grandchildren or great-grandchildren had become French monolingual.⁴⁹ He also identified that the active use of Breton had suddenly stopped in one generation (29).

The breakdown of the intergenerational transmission of Breton is further illustrated by an inquiry conducted in *Finistère*⁵⁰ by Williamson *et al* (1983) in the early 80s. Analysis of 77 interviews revealed that only 5% of younger Bretons (those below 40) used the language with their children. It highlighted the loss of competence in the language among the younger generation (80), (see also M.C. Jones, 1996).

The total collapse of Breton use within the youngest group of those of child-bearing age was also analysed by Broudic (1995: 189-93; 211-48) in three inquiries (1983, 1990, 1997), each one showing a deeper retreat of Breton (see also M.C. Jones (1998a: 71)). In the 1997 study, Broudic (1999) estimated that over 88% of Breton speakers born before 1950 had learnt the language from their parents and that only 0.6% of the population born around 1980s had Breton before going to school.

Two recent and successive official surveys also indicate the interruption of intergenerational language transmission.⁵¹ Their findings show a very low level of

⁴⁹ This was corroborated by a Euromosaic (n.d.) report: "language change from monolingual Breton speakers to monolingual French speakers has been almost totally completed within two generations". Broudic (1995: 355) calls this language shift an "evolution in three generations".

⁵⁰ Finistère is the local authority with the highest proportion of Breton speakers.

⁵¹ Unlike in other countries, censuses in France did not include questions about spoken language until 1999.

language reproduction: from zero⁵² (INSEE-INED, 1993) to 6%⁵³ (INSEE, 2003) and even when the intergenerational transmission occurred, “it was always on an occasional basis” (2003: 22). That same inquiry established that in the 1920s, 60% of the children with Breton had received the language from their parents. It also estimated that less than 5% of Breton speakers were below 40 years of age (INSEE, 1999).

4.2.4.4 The standardization of Breton

At the beginning of the 20th century, linguists created a new Breton standard. In doing so, they totally disregarded the local varieties and the existing standard, used by the church. They considered them tainted by French and referred to them in derogatory terms as ‘*breton de vaches*’ (used by farmers, lit. cow-Breton) and ‘*breton de curés*’ (priest-Breton). In their quest for purification, linguists, none of whom was a first language speaker, coded a *néo-breton* (Le Dû, 1999: 29) borrowing from Welsh and excluding long-standing French loanwords (M.C. Jones: 2000: 177).

A recurrent theme in studies about Breton is the distance of standardized Breton from the varieties used daily by first language speakers (Timm, 1980; McDonald, 1989; Kuter, 1989; M.C. Jones, 1998b; Le Dû, 1999; Quéré, 2000; Romaine, 2000). Its rejection or inadequacy is suggested by the figures of speech used to name the standard, all indicating a rupture with spoken varieties: “*breton neutre*” (Kuter, 1989: 85), “*breton des livres*” (Timm, 1980: 32), “*breton chimique*” (Abjean, 1986-87: 147), “Néo-Breton xenolect” (M.C. Jones, 1995: 435) “*breton espérantoïde*” (Le Berre and Le Dû, 1997), “*langue virtuelle*” (Guéguen, 2006: 425).

The new standard language is tangibly distinct and perceived as such, and on top of this, *néo-breton* and local varieties are spoken by specific strata within the population, divided along social classes. M.C. Jones (1995) finely describes the threefold linguistic situation as follows:

“Firstly, there is dialectal Breton, showing French influence in its lexicon but not in its syntax and predominantly spoken by the working-class. Then, there is standardized literary Breton, with no particular French influence. Thirdly, there is the spoken version of standardized literary Breton, usually the variety spoken by the *Néo-bretonnants*, which shows French influence in its syntax but not in its

⁵² In their sample, none of the parents with Breton had transmitted the language to their children.

⁵³ That inquiry did not follow a longitudinal approach, therefore that figure might also include first language French speakers speaking Breton to their children.

lexicon and is spoken predominantly by the middle-classes. Although both the obsolescent and reviving varieties are termed 'Breton', they are not, strictly speaking, the same language" (*emphasis original* 434).

4.2.4.5 Issues arising

Breton, especially *néo-breton*, has the advantage of benefiting from a positive image in the public domain with many people having changed their derogatory stand towards the language.

M.C. Jones (1995) sees standard Breton as a new dawn. "[I]t would appear that Breton is simultaneously experiencing language birth and death...[N]on-native speakers have consciously chosen to use their second language with their offspring, who therefore grow up speaking 'new' Breton, with its syntactic Gallicisms, as one of their native tongues" (437, 434). Hornsby (2005) also believes that *néo-breton* will become "more and more nativized as the bilingual and immersion schools produce new generations of Breton speakers" (207).

However, their enthusiastic stance needs to be tempered as it betrays a serious misunderstanding of the nature of communication and society. First of all, the percentage of learners is very small (see above) and as Le Dû (1999: 31) stresses, only 5% of parents living in *Finistère* support the expansion of bilingual education. Moreover, mandatory Breton education is not an acceptable route for most Bretons because despite 74% of Hoaré's (1999) respondents agreeing "on the importance of preserving Breton, 62%...felt the teaching of Breton should not be compulsory in schools in Brittany...[and] 68% think that it is more useful to learn a foreign language such as English or German, than Breton" (49), (see also Cole and Williams, 2004; Broudic, n.d.).

Second, many youngsters in Hoaré's (1999) inquiry expressed "positive attitudes towards Breton **without actively engaging** in the realization of goals associated with these attitudes" (*my emphasis* 52); "*I find it important that there will always be people who speak Breton, not me particularly, but others. [Breton] 'has to go on; personally I am not*

*going to take it on, but there are others that will go for it*⁵⁴ (my emphasis my translation 52).

Another difficulty, already highlighted above is that *néo-breton* speakers and traditional speakers are divided “in terms of their geographical location, social backgrounds, the nature of the variety they speak and even their reasons for speaking it” (M.C. Jones, 2000: 186). Wmffre (2006) spoke of “mistrust between learners and native speakers” (251). Kuter (1989) also noticed the same opposition: “[i]t is ironic...that it has been members of the upper and middle-classes, often learning Breton as a second language, who...promote the language, while rural native speakers have, on the whole, attempted to rid themselves of this language as part of a negative Breton identity” (84). Timm (1980) draws a similar picture of a division between the ‘*avant-garde pionnière*’ of Breton speakers, city-dwellers, and “the [rural] ‘*arrière-garde routinière*’, who speak Breton in front of their children through force of habit rather than by design” (33). These remarks are echoed by Broudic (1999), who found evidence of support mainly among professional and managerial occupations and the students for the teaching of Breton. Guéguen (2006: 311-12) also found that parents of children in *Diwan* belonged to these social categories.

State support for Breton can help social networks using Breton to develop, but it needs to be emphasized that only a small number of pupils and adults are learning Breton as a second language. Timm’s (2003) position is cautious and realistic about the impact of the *néo-Bretonnants* on the revitalization of Breton. As “[t]he traditional speaker segment of the Breton population is incontestably disappearing” (12), she wonders if *néo-breton* will ever become a language used within families and community. In her research on *Diwan* schools, Guéguen (2006) is more clear-cut; she concluded that Breton linguistic immersion is “a theoretical mistake and a failure as far as language use is concerned”⁵⁵ (427) by children having followed such an education.

This section dealing with the situation of Breton has shown that its image has improved, while cultural attributes and discourses about its survival have also gained momentum. Breton has become the focus of many debates without being conducted through its

⁵⁴ “*je trouve ça important qu’il y aura toujours des gens qui parlent breton, pas spécialement moi, mais d’autres*”. “*moi je dis qu’il faut continuer, moi je suis pas là pour continuer, mais il y a d’autres qui continueront*”. This mirrors my own attitude (see Chapter two).

⁵⁵ “une erreur au niveau théorique et un échec au niveau de la pratique”.

medium. Meanwhile first language speakers have virtually ended the familial transmission of local Breton, leading to the disappearance of varieties, and the younger speakers use a new standard learnt as a second language.

4.3 Conclusion

Every Celtic language enjoys more recognition in its use for public purposes thanks to an enhanced profile. The approaches adopted by language planning policies have the intention of pulling most native speakers out of a diglossic situation, giving them the opportunity to become fully fluent. These are also aimed at improving the image of the language by promoting it amongst a wider public.

However, this chapter also showed that institutional protection of minority languages does not necessarily result in outcomes of confirmed successful language maintenance. Despite strong and committed language policies, “none of the Celtic languages has secured a major urban area which is predominantly monolingual” (Romaine, 1989: 41). In addition, every Celtic language still loses speakers and appears to struggle to mend “the ‘chain’...[of] linguistic continuity between the generations” (McDonald, 1989: 208). Moreover, the intensifying geolinguistic fragmentation and the ‘new’ standards are perceived to be remote from the dialect of many first language speakers. This raises issues concerning the legitimacy of the standard language, fraught with underlying social divisions.

On a positive note, however, the success of language policies lies in their achievement in attracting learners, a characteristic shared by all the Celtic languages,⁵⁶ although the increase in the number of school-aged speakers should also be greeted with caution as they are “due to the establishment of these languages as a school subject” (Wmffre, 2006: 235).

All the same, the future of these languages appears to depend mainly on these learners and the effective switch of a L2 to a L1 regarding their future societal use. Therefore, it is crucial to understand learners’ motivations, how they identify with the language and also why they are in a bilingual school in the first place; the family context and the background to the educational choice could influence their rapport with the language.

⁵⁶ For instance, the number of native Gaelic speakers and learners is estimated to be equal (Mackinnon [2003] cited in Wmffre, 2004: 157) and for Irish “there are probably ten learners to every native speaker” (Wmffre, 2004: 156).

5 BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND THE CHOICE OF SCHOOLS

This chapter will introduce the concept of bilingual education. It will describe the different types of programmes available and the issues arising from them. We shall see that the school choice is not necessarily linked with the aim of revitalizing a declining language, but with motivations that were not necessarily foreseen by language planning policy-makers.

In the second part, an analysis of literature focusing on parents and schools will help to understand the rationale underlying the educational choices of some parents.

Nowadays, as seen in the previous chapter, many authorities offer institutional support for minority languages. Bilingual and immersion provisions cater for local populations with the aim of educating, maintaining and promoting the minority language.

For Baker (2007), “[b]ilingual education’ is an ambiguous, generic term” (131). It is true that ‘bilingual education’ describes a wide-range of language programmes, which are diverse in their organization and intensity. Researchers themselves have different conceptions of what constitutes a bilingual programme and regarding the way it should be implemented. “In many contexts, we see conflict and controversy about what bilingual education means and who bilingual education programmes are intended to serve” (Freeman, 2008: 84).

Although the purpose of this chapter is not to detail the ideological differences between researchers, it is worth presenting succinctly various bilingual programmes, their structure and their aims.⁵⁷ This chapter will begin with an outline of the different types of programmes, followed by a discussion of their positive consequences for children. Then, an analysis of the literature draws upon sociological concepts and focuses on parents and

⁵⁷ For a full presentation of the numerous bilingual programmes, see Wiley (1996), Johnstone (2000), Baker (2006, 2007), García and Baker (2007), García (2009). See also tables and classifications set out by Baker (1996: 175), May (2008: 19-29) and García (2009: 282).

the educational systems they choose for their children. It is through this conceptual framework that this thesis seeks to answer the research questions. Finally, some types of bilingual schools will be described before presenting an exploratory rationale for the parental choice of minority language education.

5.1 Types of bilingual programmes and benefits

The various bilingual programmes follow distinct models, reflecting specific aims regarding the retention of the minority language as Wiley's (1996) classification indicates:

- Transitional model (language shift, cultural assimilation, social incorporation);
- Maintenance model (language maintenance, strengthened cultural identity, civil rights affirmation);
- Enrichment model (language development, cultural pluralism, social autonomy).

This section describes the different types of bilingual programmes, from the basic provision of a target language in mainstream schools to the presentation of intensive target language exposure, i.e. the immersion programmes; it will also introduce the perceived benefits associated with a bilingual education.

5.1.1 Bilingual programmes in mainstream education

Currently, in mainstream education, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – supported by the European Union – tends to replace traditional foreign language teaching. The target language itself is used as a medium across a few subjects to deliver part of the curriculum. This arrangement increases exposure to the language and gives the student a reasonable opportunity to learn and practise the target language.

Some schools have adopted a stronger approach by establishing other forms of bilingual education, offering much greater exposure to the target language. In a bilingual school or programme, the target language becomes the language used to deliver half of the curriculum or the entire curriculum. Several types of bilingual programmes can be mentioned here, classified as 'weak' or 'strong' forms of bilingual education, depending on their linguistic, cultural and social goals.

5.1.2 Transitional bilingual programme

The transitional bilingual programme is a ‘weak’ form of bilingual education as it only uses the home language in order “to attain monolingualism and enculturation in the majority language” (Baker, 2007: 133). Its main aim is not to maintain or promote the home language, but to engineer a shift to the majority language, resulting in the assimilation of the minority population into mainstream society (Hornberger, 1996: 462). It represents a subtractive form of bilingual education.

5.1.3 Maintenance language programmes

In contrast, programmes termed ‘maintenance’ or ‘heritage language’, ‘immersion’ and ‘two-way’ or ‘dual-language’ are designed to maintain and support the minority language. Pupils can successfully become bilingual without losing their home language.

“There is no need for ‘either-or’ solutions (either you ‘cling to’ your old language, and it means you don’t learn the new one, or you learn the new and it inevitably means losing the old). ‘Both-and’ is better for the individual and for society. Both are enriched by bilingualism” (Skuttnab-Kangas, 1996: 185).

These maintenance or enrichment programmes seek to develop a high degree of proficiency in the child’s home or second language. They are additive⁵⁸ and represent ‘strong’ forms of bilingual education. Their objectives are to offer the pupils “academic achievement and cultural pluralism” (Freeman, 1998: 5). Consequently, each of these programmes is developed within a bilingual framework adapted and organized to cater for the needs of the children.

5.1.3.1 Two-way bilingual or dual immersion (US) programmes

The two-way bilingual (dual language) or dual immersion (US) programmes gather an approximately equal number of majority and minority pupils. They are taught “initially mainly through the medium of a minority language (the 90% – 10% model) or through the medium of both languages (the 50%–50% model), with the dominant language taught as a

⁵⁸ In language revitalization programmes, García (2009) uses another terminology. Minority children are located along a bilingual continuum, so they already know some of the language, therefore it cannot be added, but recovered and developed. She speaks of a recursive model. UNESCO (2010: 16) uses ‘language recovery’.

subject” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 618). The amount of teaching in the majority language increases in the 90%–10% models in order to allow minority children to become fully bilingual and biliterate in the majority language. This type of bilingual education is prevalent in the United States (Baker, 2007) and produces fully bilingual and biliterate students with an emphasis on bilingual and multicultural outcomes (Freeman, 1998; Baker, 2001).

5.1.3.2 Language maintenance and immersion programmes

Contrary to dual-language schools, language maintenance or heritage programmes are aimed at minority language children. Their objectives are to foster the children’s home language, to strengthen and develop it, while embodying the linguistic rights of the minority they are part of (Hornberger, 1996). The aim of these programmes is not solely language maintenance. They are set up to instil full fluency of the heritage language to the children and in this context, they can be considered as developmental heritage programmes (Hornberger, 1996 and Baker, 2001).

In these programmes, minority children (often with a low-status mother tongue) choose to be taught “through the medium of their own mother tongue, in classes with minority children with the same mother tongue only, where the teacher is bilingual” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 601). These schools can be called instruction-based mother tongue schools, minority language medium schools or units – when the units are part of a mainstream school.

In a language shift situation, the linguistic proficiency of the minority children may be varied and could be placed along a continuum of proficiency ranging from full fluency to low level of competence, these children being “closer to the enrichment end of the continuum” (May, 2008: 23). In this context, the aim of bilingual education is to reclaim and revitalize the endangered language through an ‘immersion revitalization bilingual programme’ García (2009), almost akin to immersion education.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ For this reason in this thesis, minority language medium units or schools and immersion units or schools are used as synonyms.

Immersion programmes are specifically aimed at pupils with a majority language background. The pupils are taught “through the medium of a foreign (minority) language, in classes with majority children with the same mother tongue only...and where their mother tongue is in no danger of not developing or of being replaced by the language instruction” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 614). It is an additive language-learning situation for enrichment. Immersion programmes have developed since the time of the Canadian experiment, which started in 1965 near Montreal, following pressure from “disgruntled English-speaking, middle-class parents” (Baker and S. Prys Jones, 1998: 496) who wanted their children to become bilingual with French through content teaching.

Building on that particular parental request, various types of immersion programmes developed. They offer a wide range of choice according to the age when the child starts the immersion education: early, middle (delayed), late or double immersion. Immersion education is also organized according to the amount of teaching time; a child is taught through the target language, with total immersion being 100% and partial 50%.

The early total immersion programme is the most common immersion model. Throughout the first year of the programme, only the second or target language is used for content teaching and for the interactions between the teacher and the pupils, in order to maximize the amount of language exposure. In the following years, the first and majority language is gradually introduced until it is used to deliver around half of the curriculum, in order that the pupils develop a full competence in both languages.

These immersion programmes have been successfully developed across the world for languages of wider communication (for example French in Canada, Swedish in Finland and Dutch in Belgium) and for endangered languages. A few examples of the latter are Native American and South African languages, Maori, Irish, Welsh, Basque, Kanak, Quechua, Mixtec, Otomí, Aymara, Saami, Breton and Gaelic.

5.1.4 The benefits of a bilingual education

Beyond the remits of maintaining, developing the home language and fostering the values of a traditional culture and its language, the three ‘strong’ bilingual programmes (language maintenance, dual immersion and immersion) must offer the same levels of achievement as mainstream education. Children must become biliterate and acquire full competence in the

majority language and “in addition...achieve bilingualism and biliteracy at no cost to general academic achievement” (Baker, 2007: 141-2). In this sense, it enhances the education the children receive and thus is seen as beneficial for their development.⁶⁰

5.1.4.1 Some historical and contemporary findings

At the beginning of the 20th century, it was thought and even demonstrated that bilingualism was harmful to the child’s cognitive and psychological development; it led to “moral depravity, stuttering, left-handedness, idleness” and was the cause of mental retardation (Edwards, 2003: 32).⁶¹ Jespersen ([1922: 220] cited in Davies, 2003: 81) warned of the brain overload due to storing two languages and its limiting consequences; an analysis by Saer ([1924] cited in Romaine, 1995: 110 and Wei, 2008: 140) attributed the lower IQ of Welsh-speaking children to their bilingualism. A study by Macnamara (1966) showed that bilingualism resulted in lower verbal intelligence or ability in problem arithmetic.

These findings were later discredited due to their flawed methodology. Other studies showed that on the contrary, bilingualism had a positive effect. According to Cummins (2003: 61) more than 150 studies conducted during the past 35 years indicate the positive effect of bilingualism. Several inquiries focused on the levels of attainment of children receiving a bilingual education through immersion. For instance, in Canadian immersion programmes, Peal and Lambert ([1962] cited in Romaine, 1995) found that “bilingual children performed better than” their monolingual counterparts (112), a finding confirmed by Swain’s later research (1997). For Artigal ([1993: 40-1] cited in Baker and S. Prys Jones, 1998), children following a Catalan immersion programme “perform[ed] as well and sometimes better than their Hispanophone peers” in mainstream education (501). In Scotland, Johnstone *et al* (1999: 12) found that Gaelic immersion children were not disadvantaged (see also O’Hanlon *et al*, 2010). These findings were equally true of Hawaiian and Navajo children following a bilingual education (McCarty, 1997).

Thus, studies suggest that learning another language through immersion results in no loss in the academic attainment of the children and that “the benefits and potential benefits

⁶⁰ Numerous studies have been conducted to assess the impact of bilingualism on a child’s intelligence, which are reviewed by Romaine (1989, 1995, 2000), Baker (2006) and McKendry (2007).

⁶¹ See also Diebold [1968] cited in Genesee (2003).

weigh in to make bilingualism a rare positive experience for children” (Bialystok, 2004: 598). In fact, it is a ‘win-win’ situation as bilingual programmes compare well with mainstream curriculum delivery, with the added value of another language.

However, no research has ever established a direct relationship between bilingualism and accrued cognitive capacities. Moreover, in most studies, sampling methods biased to produce enhanced results might be questioned on several counts, such as small sample size, Hawthorne effect and the social background of children (see Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 337; Baker, 2007: 144). UNESCO (2010a) notes that there is insufficient evidence of the effectiveness of these programmes to rally large-scale support” (36), even if most inquiries point to their positive outcomes.

5.1.4.2 The benefits for the children

Despite the unresolved issues around sampling, many researchers maintain that following an immersion programme results in the acquisition of advantageous skills for the child as long as his bilingualism has reached a certain level (Cummins, 2000; Ricciardelli [1992] cited in Bialystok, 2001: 136-7; 204-5). Bialystok (2001) found that “the control over attention and inhibition, may develop differently and more advantageously in bilingual children” (248).

Wei (2000) classified the advantages of bilinguals around three main points: the communicative, cultural and cognitive. He believes that bilingualism has a positive impact “from creative thinking to faster progress in early cognitive development and greater sensitivity in communication...more awareness of language and more fluency, flexibility and elaboration in thinking” (24).

Baker (2007) has also linked eight advantages to strong forms of bilingual education. One of them relates to intergenerational and societal interactive communication through the heritage language,⁶² whereas the others focus on the development of the individual sensitized to cultural diversity. Among these, bilingual programmes boost the employment prospects and the cognitive capacities of the child (“metalinguistic abilities, divergent and creative thinking” (148)). These increased metalinguistic abilities – which Baker (2001)

⁶² This advantage in increasing self-esteem and providing a stronger sense of identity would apply especially to maintenance or heritage programmes.

describes in his chapter ‘Bilingualism and thinking’⁶³ – could result in “earlier reading acquisition that, in turn, can lead to higher levels of academic achievement” (Baker, 2001: 135). In a guide for parents, Baker (1995b) states that “bilinguals have **thinking advantages** over monolinguals...[They have] more **elasticity in thinking**...**increased sensitivity to communication**, a slightly speedier movement through the stages of **cognitive development**” (*emphasis original* 50-1)

Hagège (1999) also underlines the benefits of a bilingual education not necessarily for language maintenance purposes, but especially to provide a cultural awareness and the transferrable language skills, which will help the child to learn other languages. “In fact, these regional languages...represent a huge advantage. They help the child to learn and understand many languages. Therefore, the teaching of regional languages should be promoted, if only for educational reasons...It stimulates the learning process”⁶⁴ (*my translation* 30).

This point is closely related to that put forward by Cummins (1995, 2000), who established the existence of the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) principle. It implies that a prior developed experience in one language can promote the development of the proficiency underlying another language because both operate through the same central processing system and skills can be transferred. The ease with which children will learn a third language is also highlighted by Dalgadian (2000: 39).

All of these points (and especially those relating to supposed enhanced cognitive abilities) are often promoted by linguists and relayed via school brochures in order to entice parents to enrol their children into immersion programmes. Examples of websites providing these kinds of arguments are *Div Yezh* (2006a, 2006b), *Dihun Breizh* (2007) and *Diwan Breizh* (2001b) in Brittany; in Ireland through video (see *Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta* (2010)) or a guide (Ni Chinnéide, 2001 produced by *Comhluadar*) and in Scotland with the guide for parents issued by *Comann nam Pàrant* (n.d.: 15). These are guides purposefully written to describe plainly the benefits that can result from a bilingual education.

⁶³ See also García (2009), especially the chapter ‘The benefits of bilingualism’.

⁶⁴ “En somme, ces langues régionales...sont un avantage immense. Elles mettent l’enfant en état d’apprendre et de comprendre grand nombre de langues. Dès lors, on devrait recommander, ne serait-ce que pour des raisons didactiques, l’enseignement des langues régionales aux enfants...On a affaire à une incitation à apprendre”.

With so many advantages used as marketing arguments, it should not come as a surprise that “the immersion area seems generally to inspire a lot of enthusiasm” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 617).

5.2 Research literature on parental choice and bilingual education

Education through the medium of a minority language has attracted a spectacular and growing interest in the past two decades. The provision of such a facility is intended to educate, maintain and/or revitalize minority languages. Its main aim is to help children to become fully bilingual, either by expanding and reinforcing a grasp of the language for the native speakers or by enabling children who are majority speakers to become fully fluent in the minority language. It has also been praised for its beneficial outcomes on the child’s intellectual capacities. Whilst it sounds ideal, choosing this kind of education is not free from meaning; it is an objectified practice, which satisfies parental aspirations and concerns regarding their children’s education and as such, it is informed by the parents’ values and principles.

The following points will help in understanding how central the concept of choice is for parents. Following this we will explore how the selection of a bilingual education can be interpreted as a particular educational strategy, not necessarily endorsed by native language speakers. Finally, the last section will show how parental selection applies to the different school settings to offer a preferential education to their children.

5.2.1 The importance of the right education and the theory of practice

Historically, the importance given to education is rooted in the rise of the bourgeoisie and resulted in the creation of a specialized professional body (Frykman and Lofgren, 1987: 107). Education contributed to give the bourgeoisie, economically secure, the cultural and symbolic capital it needed to establish itself.

Now that education is compulsory and free, it is the choice of schools through which a class strategy can be underpinned. “The education market has become one of the most

important loci of class struggle” (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 2000: 917). Many sociologists acknowledge that school education is at the centre of many parents’ preoccupations.

Goldthorpe (1996) explains how the evaluation of the different educational options by parents is socially orientated, through weighing up the costs and benefits and the chances of bringing success. Every parent nurtures a high level of aspiration for their children, but variation in the courses of action taken by parents from different social origins “in pursuing any given goal...[is linked to the] different ‘social distances’...to be traversed” (490).

Schooling offers knowledge and skills, which in turn open opportunities for children. Obtaining these rewards usually guides the educational choices parents make for their children. Moreover evaluating schools in order to select the best one for their children is facilitated when the parents are endowed with a high cultural, social and economic capital (see Bourdieu and Passeron (1990)).

Bourdieu’s theory of practice provides a fine and insightful framework through which the rationale behind the selection of schools can be analysed. First, society is divided into ‘fields’ in which individuals or groups of agents (classes) possess differing amounts of capital (economic, cultural, symbolic and social, through connections and ties). The amount of capital an individual possesses in each field represents his habitus. “The habitus is a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour acquired through acting in society. It reflects the different positions people have in society” (Bourdieu, 2000: 19). Part of the habitus is inherited through the person’s social milieu, the other part is constructed through the experiences encountered in society; thus, the habitus of an individual or a group is a structure and at the same time, it is structuring in the sense that it is evolving through societal interactions.

The choices people make are guided by their habitus and the amount of capital they wish to increase. “The agent is not akin to a blind follower of traditions but rather to a skilled game player, with a ‘feel for the game’ which allows her to pursue strategic ends in skilful ways” (Crossley, 2002: 176). “Just as the behaviour of individual agents is governed by their subjective interests, definitions, etc., so too with groups and communities” (173).

5.2.2 Selecting educational options

The educational field is an area where such strategic choices can be witnessed, with parents calculating and evaluating the best options for their children. “Elite schooling is...an effective means to store value, which can later be released as surplus meaning...cultural capital” (Ball, 2003: 86). Choosing a school represents an investment strategy with a long-term view of future benefits.

Related research has been conducted by Gewirtz *et al* (1995). They named these parents, “the privileged/skilled choosers[. They] are inclined to a consumerist approach to choice of school, that is, the idea and worth having a choice between schools is valued and there is a concern to examine what is on offer and seek out ‘the best’” (182). Their cultural capital enables them to decode and assess the benefits good schools will bring to their children in terms of their educational prospects and career. The other categories they have identified are the “semi-skilled choosers” and the “disconnected choosers”. The semi-skilled choosers consider a range of options for their children’s education, but due to their lack of inside knowledge and self-confidence and/or financial considerations, they tend “to ‘settle’ for the local, community, comprehensive schools” (182). The disconnected choosers “are almost exclusively working-class” (182) and in general, they do not show any wish to choose a school other than the local one for their children. The researchers’ conclusion was that “[m]iddle-class parents...will always be most inclined to engage with the market and best skilled to exploit it to their children’s advantage” (189).

This analysis echoes Ball’s (2003) comment that

“education policies are primarily aimed at satisfying the concerns and interests of the middle-class”... “[P]articular policies of choice and competence give particular advantages to the middle-class, while not appearing to do so, and...the middle class are adept at taking up and making the most of the opportunities of advantage that policies present to them” (25, 26).

Despite the end of selective schools, it is school choice that acts as a sorting mechanism for a class-dividing outcome; parents with a high cultural capital make an informed school selection.

This choice may be based on several factors. For instance, the social background of the parents can be positively or negatively evaluated. Usually, a high proportion of middle-class parents results in an oversubscribed school; it is the postcode business which sees “some ‘neighbourhood’ comprehensive schools...‘colonized’ by predominantly middle-

class intakes” (Power *et al*, 2003: 17). The selection may also be curriculum-based with “various streaming and banding arrangements” (17), especially when the manipulation of school catchment boundaries has failed.

Parents find other means to channel their children and offer them what they consider to be a better education via the selection of subjects at school. In some schools, the option to study classical or unusual languages attracts these middle-class parents. Ball (2003) noticed that “more direct pressure from particular parents or groups of parents has led to specific responses in schools, such as the creation of what are called ‘ability groups’...or specialist foreign language classes which have the same ability ‘creaming’ effect” (40). This parental strategy has also been observed in an inquiry led in France by van Zanten (2001): “[t]hese parents are active in creating ‘protected trajectories’ for their children in secondary schools, which generally lead them to request the study of specific subjects, grouping good-ability level and well-behaved pupils together”⁶⁵ (*my translation* 104-5). In a tacit agreement with the parents, the headteacher who wishes to persuade good pupils to stay will “create one or two ‘good’ classes by juggling with the language options”⁶⁶ (*my translation* 121), using the wider cultural choice argument to justify his decision.

Recently, in France, more and more schools offer special classes with the option to study some subjects through a second language (called ‘*classes européennes*’). This provision is usually offered to the most able and/or motivated children. As a result, these children have additive skills compared to others thanks to their parents’ choice of a specialized trajectory. These languages are considered as valuable assets – especially when rare; moreover, they have the advantage of stretching pupils’ attainment through bilingualism and they present a tactical value, by grouping good pupils together. In addition, the cultural element enriches the lives of the pupils.

This additive model also corresponds to some extent to the minority language medium schools where parents have purposely selected an education for their children through the medium of a language they are not familiar with (strict definition of immersion education). In this new light, choosing a school offering a bilingual education becomes an indicator of parental aspirations for their children and the educational interest could explain to some

⁶⁵ “Ces parents sont donc conduits très souvent à essayer de construire des ‘parcours protégés’ pour leurs enfants à l’intérieur même des collèges, ce qui se traduit généralement par une demande de placement dans des classes et des options spécifiques où sont regroupés des élèves de bon niveau scolaire et disciplinés”.

⁶⁶ “de créer une ou deux ‘bonnes’ classes en jouant notamment sur les options de langue”.

extent the reasons why so many parents are “lobbying” for the development of minority language education.⁶⁷ This is one of the research questions intended to be addressed by this thesis.

5.2.3 Parental aspirations through the choice of bilingual education

5.2.3.1 Parents and international schools

It is well-accepted that international and European schools offering a bilingual/trilingual education are “[m]ainly for the affluent...Children in these [private and/or selective] schools often have parents in the diplomatic service, multinational organizations, or in international businesses...[As for the other pupils, parents] want their children to have an internationally flavoured education” (Baker and S. Prys Jones, 1998: 533).

Parents are aware that fluency in two or more prestigious languages opens multiple opportunities for the children who benefit from such an education. Throughout their schooling, children will have acquired valuable skills, which they will be able to turn to their advantage in terms of employment and symbolic status. These schools participate in the maintenance of a family’s social status and reflect the aspirations of privileged parents. Practices of plurilingual literacies are not simply markers of national or ethnic identity, but have become a form of economic and social capital in integrated markets and a globalized world (Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 1999a, 1999b).

5.2.3.2 Parents and immersion programmes

The same observation may be made of immersion programmes; they reflect middle-class choices. Several researchers acknowledged that this model of bilingual education attracts middle-class parents (Edwards, 1994; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996; Ó Riagáin, 1997; Willemyns, 1997; Heller, 1999a, 1999b, 2003; etc.). For example, May (2008) noticed that Welsh-medium schools “include many middle-class L1 English speakers” (22); Skutnabb-

⁶⁷ For Gaelic-medium education, see MacLeod (2003: 3-4), Nisbet (2003: 49), Ward: “parental power” (2003: 45), Rogers and McLeod: “parent activism” (2006: 368).
For Welsh-medium education, see Rawkins (1987), Baker (1997: 132).
For Irish-medium education, see Ó Riagáin (1997: 248-9), Hickey (1997: 17).
For Basque-medium education, see Garmendia and Agote (1997: 101).
For French-medium education in Canada, see Swain (1997: 262), Erfurt (1999: 63), Heller (2003: 86).
For Quechua-medium education, see Hornberger and King (1996: 432).

Kangas (1996) also noted that minority language “medium education might be influenced by (elite) concerns by ‘international cooperation’ (e.g. immersion programmes or European or international schools being offered for majority children)” (176).

In an earlier paper, Fishman ([1982: 25] cited in de Mejía, 2002: 45) commented that these programmes were attended by pupils who came from “the most fortunate socio-economic background” and that immersion education represented “a direct descendant of elitist” bilingual education.

These remarks stem from the researchers’ observations, because hardly any specific inquiry has ever been published. The rationale or underlying principle explaining this situation is twofold: the voluntary choice exerted by the parents and the enrichment aspect of the programme. Consequently, despite an inclusive and multicultural approach, which embraces the values of respect for cultural diversity, they tend to be self-selected and exclusive programmes embedded in a particular socio-historic context. These points will be explored and illustrated below through examples.

5.2.3.2.1 Immersion programmes in Quebec

Olson and Burns ([1983] cited in Swain (1997)) are aware of the criticisms concerning immersion programmes:

“[t]he voluntary nature of the programmes means that the parents of the students are usually well informed about educational issues, and are generally committed to the importance and relevance of learning FSL.⁶⁸ They tend to be from upper-middle class backgrounds, which has led to charges of elitism” (262).

This is also Heller’s (1999a, 1999b, 2003) interpretation of the immersion programmes in Canada and particularly in Quebec: “[the] French-immersion population is mainly Canadian-born, English mother tongue, white and middle-class” (2003: 86). In contrast to some scholars, who claim that this type of bilingual education brings about unity and integration, she notes how society is divided along language lines and shows that behind this supposed linguistic conflict lies the struggle for the distribution of wealth and power. French-immersion education has become a means for the anglophone community to regain some of the power lost in the 70’s, when the economic centre moved from the city Quebec

⁶⁸ FSL: French as a second language.

to Ottawa and Toronto, leaving high status vacancies to be filled by the remaining population principally speaking French (see Chapter Two).

Subsequently, this change of power-balance led to the 'Quiet Revolution', with the establishment of the Quebec government guaranteeing that advantages and economic opportunities were the preserve of French speakers or bilinguals. During this time the prestige and value of French increased and this was directly linked to a rise in interest for French-immersion education among English speakers (Heller, 1999b: 164). Becoming fluent in French meant that the anglophone community could have access to the benefits enjoyed by French speakers or it would even "give them an advantage in competing for bilingual jobs" (2003: 87). Parents enthusiastic about their children's future prospects naturally opted for French immersion education.

5.2.3.2.2 A European example (Belgium)

A study focusing on Belgium revealed exactly the same pattern of events. Willemyns (1996; 1997) established that a shift in economic and political power between the Flemish and the Walloons is at the origin of the revitalization and further spread of the Dutch language, including a surge of popularity in Dutch immersion programmes.

The turning point for the Dutch language started in the 70's, when "Belgium's economic centre of gravity shifted towards Flanders" (242). With this economic change, Dutch became the prestige language and the priority for many people was to learn it. Willemyns (1997) noted that the French-speaking upper stratum "made serious efforts" [to become bilingual; parents started] "organizing supplementary Dutch classes for pupils of elementary schools" (190, 189). Any class, which had the aim of improving Dutch fluency was in high demand. For instance, in the bilingual zone of Brussels, "the population in Dutch elementary schools had increased by 89.4%" (242), by the late 1980s.

One might argue that parents chose to educate their children through the medium of Dutch for cultural reasons (as will be discussed below) although the timing of their enthusiasm corresponded exactly to the change of fortune of the economy in the Dutch-speaking territory and consequently of its language. It would therefore be more reasonable to assume that the parental choice of Dutch-immersion education was mainly guided by the opportunities fluency in Dutch could offer their children. It is also worth mentioning that

Deprez and Wynants (Le Dû, 2009 private communication) calculated that Flemish schools were financially highly advantaged, receiving more subsidies per child – 20% of children shared 50% of the financial allocation. In addition, these researchers noticed that by choosing a “Flemish school, it [was] striking how large concentrations of immigrant children [were] avoided”⁶⁹ (1990: 49).

In this case, the reversal of language shift followed an economic and political balance-shift toward the Flemish community. This in turn increased the prestige of Dutch and it is only at that point that people took advantage of the linguistic legislation put in place to facilitate the use and the learning of Dutch, for example through Dutch-immersion education.

5.2.3.2.3 Bilingual education as a cultural choice

de Mejía (2002) assures us that dual-language or two-way programmes (US) are not elitist as their intake comes from those of mixed language backgrounds (minority and majority). On the contrary, she believes that their aim beyond academic achievement for all is the promotion of cultural pluralism at school and in the community. To this end, their guiding policy is designed to encourage diversity, tolerance and to develop good intercultural communication skills. Freeman (1998) in her ethnographic analysis of the Oyster dual-language school (Spanish/English) also understands parental choice as being representative of the surrounding multicultural society and interprets social and behavioural differences through a cultural framework.

However, the social class issue is tangible in some parts of her research, when for instance many privileged English-speaking parents are interested in their children following a bilingual education. One of the teachers of the Oyster school commented on the varied social backgrounds of the children: “here Hispanic is poor and black and white is rich...we don’t have a middle-class here...we have rich and poor” (Freeman, 1998: 127).

Another issue differentiated children with a Hispanic background from the affluent Anglo-speaking children; the Anglo-parents belonging to the higher social strata had instilled in their children the importance of fluency in another language. As the same teacher observes,

⁶⁹ Deprez and Wynants (1990) found that many parents (foreigners themselves) appreciated “the low number of immigrant children in the Flemish schools” (49). This point was also noted in Chapter Three in the context of the Irish-medium school selection (Duncan, 2008).

“the white kids already know the value of what another language is going to do for them” (Freeman, 1998: 187).

5.2.3.2.4 Summary

The three situations described above deal with the teaching of children who already benefit from a majority language. Through immersion education, they are expected to add another high-status language to their repertoire such as French, Dutch or Spanish. These programmes are clearly enrichment programmes, specifically chosen by parents for additive bilingualism.

However, this situation can be transposed to the choice of education in a minority language. In the case of majority language children, medium or bilingual education represents an enrichment programme that can only add value to their development. Moreover, bilingualism has been shown to have no detrimental effect on the development of the majority language (McCarty, 1997; Johnstone *et al*, 1999; Cummins, 2003; O’Hanlon *et al*, 2010).

Thus, the decision to send children to a bilingual school can be polysemic and lie beyond an apparently obvious reality. It may not be primarily motivated by language maintenance.

“Even when they give every appearance of disinterest because they escape the logic of ‘economic’ interest (in the narrow sense) and are oriented towards non-material stakes that are not easily quantified, as in...the cultural sphere of capitalist societies, practices never cease to comply with an economic logic” (Thompson, 1991: 16).

5.3 Minority languages and their value for parents

This section explores the different reasons why parents chose a minority language education. It shows how parents according to their background and their various links to the minority language value such an education. Parental choice is analysed through a social and psychological conceptual understanding; it explains that indigenous and minority languages separated from their context can be valued differently according to a person’s viewpoint and social background. It is this psychological detachment, which enabled the attribution of a positive value to minority languages and their subsequent transformation

into cultural assets. This change has its origin in literary developments during the Romantic period, which saw the emergence of the interest for popular culture. This outlook contributed to changing the perception of a heavily stigmatized culture into a desirable asset. The once wholesale culture has been broken up and transformed into many specialized fields such as language, dance and music, enabling people to choose and consume the selected cultural goods. It is this conception of language as an asset that can play a role in the choice parents make with regard to a bilingual education, while for others the psychological link to the language represents the essential motivation. These are the points that will be developed below, starting by the transformation of minority languages into a cultural heritage.

5.3.1 The emergence of cultural heritage: historical background

From the onset of the 19th century, “[t]he [R]omantic revolt against classicism generated an interest in the particularity and diversity of the folk and primitive culture of the ordinary people” (Featherstone, 1991: 137). It led to the later view that languages had to be preserved (Featherstone, 1991: 137). With the emergence of the new sciences of sociology and anthropology, an enthusiastic curiosity for popular and peasant culture, its oral tradition and artefacts became fashionable among people with a privileged background.

The languages ordinary folk spoke were also to receive greater attention, as the genetic affiliation of one’s language could support a claim of racial purity and hence superiority. The interest in ‘low’ culture was high. Meanwhile, people (the peasants for whom that culture and language were everyday usage) survived under difficult living conditions, which they were eager to see improve to a reasonable standard. The middle-classes were totally detached from the pragmatic reality of the harsh living conditions of the peasants and this constituted a prerequisite for developing their conception of the “wild, exotic and majestic” (Frykman and Lofgren, 1987: 52) landscape; they could embrace another meaning. Conditions conceived as quaint by members of the ruling elite or the middle-classes were despised by local people, who were experiencing a totally different reality.

Opposing points of view concerning the same object emerge from people differently located socially. Language perfectly incarnates this dichotomy in society. People, once secure in their economic and linguistic resources, could see beauty in a language used by a social stratum far removed from their daily life. This psychological and social distance

enabled them to invest the language with a high symbolic value; it did not carry any emotional stigma for the learners, which eased its transformation as an object worth learning.

At the same time, many ordinary and poor people longed to reduce this social distance and for them, ending their linguistic isolation would provide them with the means to participate economically and culturally in that society. These social changes usually entailed a social readjustment regarding their cultural practices, including language use itself. Language changes are rooted in the social circumstances and evaluations surrounding language use.

Once a practice or a language has become disregarded and therefore considered obsolete by the majority of people, it can be surprising to see the same or what appears to be the same practice returning to popularity. Its scarcity makes it all the more desirable and people, despite being aware of any previous stigma, highly rate this cultural practice or language. Its attributed value has shifted from derogatory to well-regarded. The once discredited baggage it was carrying does not affect or apply to the new consumers. On the contrary, the language has emerged as a cultural asset with intrinsic value, as a heritage worth rescuing for posterity. It is sought after and as a result, has a high symbolic value.

But this resurgence of interest in the minority language cannot be summarized by means of one reading. This phenomenon is multidimensional and this is what makes it difficult to understand, to track and to predict the direction and future of the minority language. The understanding behind people's wish for their children to learn it, study or simply their interest in it involves several explanations, which can be psychological, intellectual or sociological. The points developed below will explain the third generation return with its link to nostalgia. Next, the learning of the minority language as an intellectual pursuit will be presented before focusing on the parental choice as an objectified cultural practice.

5.3.2 Dealing with the loss of a language

Fishman (1985d) noticed that people with an ethnicity background who do not speak or have only basic competence in the minority language are often interested in learning it. This phenomenon is known as the 'third generation return'; the language has lost the primary communicative function it once had for the older generations, but the grandchildren, once adult, start learning it and through this, they channel their ethnicity.

This can explain why many parents with a minority background have selected a bilingual education for their children.

Drawing on van Gennep's (1981) theory of '*rites de passage*', this behaviour can be interpreted as a transitional stage. The language has become a symbolic element helping people to make the transition to a new social order without disavowing their past. This behaviour operates as a bridge, a way to come to terms with the loss of a language and a way of life. This symbolic remnant and acknowledgement of origins represent a stage prior to total integration, a basis on which to constitute a new sense of self with shifting patterns of socialization.

Beer (1985) adds that people in the process of a third generation return are "subject to a kind of nostalgia in which the pristine and premodern culture of their youth is contrasted with the messy industrial civilisation" (224). The culture that once was is positively remembered and some of its markers are reactivated and invested with meanings allowing people to feel at ease with their present lives (see also Robertson, 1990: 58-9).

Based on his observations of Breton activists and learners' groups, Le Berre (2006) offered an insightful explanation regarding this surge of interest in minority languages. He interpreted this behaviour as a mourning process ('*travail de deuil*') linked to nostalgia and noticed that most people learning Breton were doing so for a relatively short period. People began very enthusiastically, but this eagerness eventually wore off and they left the arena of Breton organizations to invest their energy in other interests. He noticed that many learners were connected to the declining language through ascendancy. It seemed that through this approach many tried to deal with a sense of loss regarding their parents' or grandparents' language. Once they had completed the grieving process, they could put the Breton issue aside. Most remained sympathetic to the minority language cause despite having distanced themselves from the language revitalization. The same line of explanation has been finely developed by Pentecouteau (2002), and his analysis will be revisited in the final chapter of this thesis.

Edwards (2003) also noticed this phenomenon, commenting on such learners' lack of impact on minority language revitalization. The continuing "attachment to the 'lost' language itself...rarely lead[s] to actual linguistic revival...passive sympathies do not

become active ones...These attachments...represent a sort of symbolic bilingual connectivity” (Edwards, 2003: 34).⁷⁰

So, the phenomenon known as the ‘third generation return’ corresponds to a transitional stage in people’s lives, which once dealt with is ended. However, when this process is not completed, a nostalgic state of mind endures. These people become entangled and the minority language turns into an acute emotionally laden object, with an attachment, which can be expressed in various degrees (Le Berre, 1994 private communication).

Inability to overcome language loss can be transformed and channelled through strong activism and victimization, as happened in the extremist Breton movement.

A more common way to deal with this continuing affection is the glorification of the past and the attachment to symbolic objects or cultural external appearance (flags, traditional costumes worn as a badge of allegiance and so on).⁷¹ These residual badges of ethnicity are exactly what a Welsh TV producer found expressed by people in Australia with a Welsh background: “I’ve never seen anything like this back home: flags, leeks, Welsh cakes and daffodils everywhere. There are more Welsh costumes around here than at Saint Fagan’s [a folk museum in Wales]” (Smolicz, 1992: 291).

Loss of the communicative function of a minority language leads some people with a link to the language to cope with a sense of loss by focusing on other ways of displaying their ethnicity using signs that are emblematic of a particular culture.

5.3.3 Minority languages as valuable cultural, symbolic and economic goods

Besides family link with the language, the renewed interest in minority languages may be associated with other factors such as diversity, globalization and cultural practice.

⁷⁰ If these interpretations are correct, the future of many minority languages, including the Celtic languages, is at risk. Indeed, the number of learners of these languages is on the increase, but the latest censuses showed a decrease of speakers in the traditional strongholds, presumably first language speakers. This was noted with regard to Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany in Chapter Four.

⁷¹ Yang (1996) also recognized the same process: “[t]he inability to properly mourn the loss of tradition leads to a burying of the grief that cannot be expressed...The failure to mourn the passing of tradition means that it lingers on, causing disquiet” (106).

The current trend of valuing diversity and the plurality of cultures is linked to the “cosmopolitan” concept described by Hannerz (1995): “a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures within the individual experience...It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (239).

Robertson (1990) connects this interest in diversity to the process of globalization. Increasing homogeneity reduces diversity and paradoxically puts people under pressure “to reconstruct their collective identities along pluralistic lines” (57). In this case, the sign – for example language – is reinvested, but its signifier or meaning has been given a secondary function beyond communication and adapted within a different cultural context. Stroud (2007) calls this phenomenon ‘detraditionalization’. He gives the example of individuals in Singapore modelling new intersecting multicultural identities drawing from several features, one of them being the use of “language choice in stylization of identity” (528) and this despite having no necessary connection with the language⁷² (see also Le Coadic (2003) and “*la culture hors sol*” (culture without root)).

Cultures are constantly in a process of change, with their identifiers acquiring different meanings or values anywhere from being stigmatized to highly rated. Objects may be reinvented and sought after by separate social strata, for which they represent a secondary meaning. But “[t]o argue for the reassertion of local organizational and cultural patterns, the reinvention of traditions and the creation of new types of local attachment, is...not the same as arguing for a persisting set of local traditions” (Long, 1996: 50). For instance, the primary culture, negatively valued, is deconstructed and reconstructed within another frame of reference by outsiders who give new meanings to its identifiers.

The reconstructed cultural goods serve other purposes; they are neither embedded in a socially meaningful network, nor interconnected and they retain only a tenuous link to the primary object. This represents the loss of the referent with reality being separated into several fields;⁷³ it is “the breakdown of the relationship between signifiers, the breakdown of temporality, memory, a sense of history” (Featherstone, 1991: 58). The transformed cultural objects are fixed and offered to consumers as cultural goods with the ‘pick and

⁷² Stroud (2007) does not mention the level of competence or the level of retention for those languages acquired in such circumstances.

⁷³ Baudrillard (1983) and Jameson (1984) have developed a postmodern concept of the transformation of reality into images.

choose' approach as stick-on badges of belonging to a culture, whereas before, this was a whole set of practices embedded into a social reality, which could not be separated without losing their meaning.

The reconstructed language as a cultural good is attributed a symbolic value. Bourdieu (1991) equates language to symbolic capital; it is created and legitimized by those in power, convertible to social prestige and economic success. For this author, each linguistic variety is graded within a linguistic market; it has an economic and prestigious value for its speakers. Languages or particular registers of one language act as vehicles of social meaning and can be a measure of one's education and social standing, "[b]ecause linguistic practices provide access to material resources, they become resources in their own rights" (Gal, 1989: 353).

Bourdieu (1979) explains that learning a language can also be seen as a cultural and intellectual pastime, a practice highly regarded by the professional classes. The more obscure a practice is, the more symbolic value it accumulates as fewer people can boast to have this cultural good. His research on aesthetic taste according to the professional classes and their 'habitus' is crucial to the understanding of the learning of a minority language seen in this context. "Cultural practices are always strategies for distancing oneself from what is 'common' and 'easy'" (Bourdieu, 1995: 1), they are 'strategies of distinction'.

The important issue here is that tastes represent a social construct directly associated with particular sections of the population, which share a similar habitus. 'Taste', which is in appearance straightforward with no subtext, hides a whole set of meanings according to the socially constructed representations attached to it (Featherstone, 1991: 89). In that sense, taste or practice is not a matter of meaningless choice: "to choose according to one's taste is to pick out the appropriate activity objectively attributed according to one's position" (*my translation* Bourdieu, 1979: 258).

At this point, it is important to remember that "[t]he ethnic revival of the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies [was started by] both bourgeois and leftist thinkers" (Fishman, 1990: 14). This phenomenon is attested by numerous researchers (McDonald, 1989; Woolard, 1989; Hindley, 1990; Edwards, 1994; Paulston, 1994; M.C. Jones, 1998b; Le Berre and Le Dû, 1999). It is equally interesting to remember that bilingual education attracts mainly middle-class parents (see above).

For people seeking social mobility, taste is unconsciously a calculated business: its objectified form through a practice represents a gauge of the cultural capital of the person. An individual making particular choices need not be aware of these mechanisms nor even totally conscious of the whole set of reasons underlying his decisions, but it is clear that “all social practices are ‘interested’, even if individuals are unaware of their interests, and even when the stakes are not material” (Lamarre, 2003: 63).

This theory of constructive structuralism (see Bourdieu) shows how “existing structures guide and constrain practices at the same time as it recognizes how individuals (through their capacities for thought, reflection, and action) construct social and cultural phenomenon” (Lamarre, 2003: 63). This structural constraint does not remove the freedom of choice an individual might feel he has, but each choice informs a particular trend or inclination, which helps to construct the social persona or habitus a person tries to put forward. Ultimately, an individual’s habitus represents the interface between their experiences, strategies and structural constraints.

Following this, beyond the choice made by an individual, particular patterns of the type of people making similar choices might start to emerge. By analysing the context surrounding the choice and other social data that a strategy of a specific group might be identified. This thesis aims to identify the pattern(s) of parents selecting a minority language education.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has described some models of bilingual education and their associated benefits. Sociological concepts helped to understand why education represents a central issue for some parents and this was exemplified by several language situations, which could be transposed to minority language contexts.

By selecting such an education, some parents deal with the loss of the family language whereas parents without the minority language background attribute an intrinsic value to the language itself or to the skill such an education can bring.

The reconstruction of minority languages as socially acceptable and desirable attributes is a worldwide phenomenon. They are now a sought-after commodity among learners and among parents choosing an education for their children. This enthusiasm though is not always shared by native speakers due to their own attitude towards the minority language and/or their own experience of bilingualism.

6 THEORETICAL EXPLORATION OF BILINGUALISM

After a brief presentation of bilingualism as a competence, this chapter presents the differences between elite bilingualism and collective bilingualism. It also focuses on the channels of language (re)production and the variety of the language taught in schools.

Many researchers put their faith in the increase of bilingual schools to revitalize minority languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; de Mejía, 2002; García, 2009). Schools are held as “success stories at the individual, institutional and systems levels” (Baker, 2007: 144). For instance, Artigal ([1997] cited in de Mejía, 2002: 233) believes that immersion programmes have played a major role in the revitalization of Catalan, restoring it as the main language of instruction and interaction in school. It is true that most research findings are positive (Freeman (1998); for Hawaiian, see Warner (1999); for Maori, see Durie (1997); for Saami, see Balto and Todal (1997); for Basque, see Garmendia and Agote (1997) and Baker (2006)).

An essential point at the centre of any claim for generalization is either the comparability of contexts between situations or the differences in the social background of the children. These must be clearly stated, as they can influence data, hence producing a skewed validity during comparisons. This is what many researchers forget to do when connecting the success of Canadian or Catalan-immersion programmes with a particular favourable political and economic situation. Moreover, this seemingly flawless win-win educational programme has attracted some critical comments, especially regarding its failure to reverse language shift and the lack of enthusiasm of many native speakers for that type of education.

In order to understand the reasons underlying the different interpretations linked to the researchers' conceptions, it is first necessary to define bilingualism, elite and folk bilingualism, with a particular focus on diglossia.

6.1 Some points on bilingualism

The concept of bilingualism is extremely complex to define and this is beyond the remit of the present work. The task here is not to describe in detail the numerous works covering the subject, as Baetens Beardsmore in *Bilingualism: Basic Principles* (1995) has written an expert synopsis and Hamers and Blanc (2000) have completed this work offering a multidimensional approach on language.

6.1.1 Different definitions of bilingualism

A basic definition is a person being able to express thoughts and feelings in two languages. This definition raises more questions than it solves about the threshold of bilingualism: are writing skills alone, in a second language sufficient to describe a person 'bilingual'? What level of proficiency in a second language qualifies for bilingualism?

Balanced bilinguals are deemed to have an equal mastery of two languages matching the ability of a monoglot speaker in the respective languages. This degree of bilingualism without interference is fairly uncommon. The vast majority of cases of bilinguals are “the *non-fluent bilingual* where clear divergences from monoglot speech are detectable at least in one of the languages used” (*emphasis original* Baetens Beardsmore, 1995: 10). This is also Edwards's (2004: 9) conception of bilingualism. For Haugen, a bilingual is someone who can express “complete meaningful utterances in the other language” (1953: 7).

Reference to idealized native speaker competence excludes most of the bilinguals who are secondary speakers. It is based on a western language situation, which is meaningless in the developing world where “the term ‘mother tongue’ does not have the same meaning as in the West; more relevant are the attitudes of the family and the community who desire social promotion” (Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 327).

In fact, across the world, *Portraits of the L2 user* (Cook, 2002) are numerous. Increasingly, the native-reference speaker as a measure to compare one's level of fluency is being replaced by the non-native speaker's willingness to assume confidence and identity (Davies, 2003), although native speaker's competence will remain essential as a model.

Therefore, instead of the dichotomy between native and secondary user, “[w]e should speak about ‘bilinguals’, giving the term a full range of possibilities, and taking away the negative connotations associated with being second, and not first” (García, 2009: 60) to concentrate on the outcome of multi-competence.

6.1.2 Age of language acquisition in terms of bilingualism

The levels of proficiency attained vary according to exposure, input, use, interest and the age at which one starts learning the target language. The age variable is especially significant regarding the reproduction of sounds. Early bilingualism is the best way to acquire a native-like accent and word-structure as supposed to late bilingualism introduced during or after adolescence. Early bilingualism is further subdivided into simultaneous bilingualism when two languages are acquired simultaneously as first languages (L1) and sequential bilingualism when the second language (L2) is learnt after L1. Early and late bilingualism are also called successive and consecutive bilingualism.

One has to bear in mind that a language spoken during childhood can be forgotten unless it has been used by the person until adolescence and activated subsequently. Thus, bilinguals can be classified along a continuum. Some bilinguals possess very high levels of proficiency in both languages in written and oral modes. Others display varying proficiencies in understanding⁷⁴ and/or in speaking skills depending on the context of language use.

Researchers (Patkowski [1980] cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2001; Hagège, 1999) speak of a ‘Critical Hypothesis Period’, being the best age for an individual to acquire languages. Hagège (1999) and Paradis (2003) situate that period around the age of four to five. Baker (2003) also mentions that a language is best learnt when young: “[i]n early childhood, a language is acquired easily and naturally, spontaneously and subconsciously” (103). Paradis (2003) believes that the cerebral mechanisms used by early bilinguals are similar to the activation patterns used for recalling the natural first learnt language. As for late bilinguals, they rely more on “memory-based metalinguistic knowledge and right-hemisphere-based pragmatic competence” (362).

⁷⁴ The term *understanding* skills was preferred to *listening*, which is associated with a passive activity.

There might exist a “sensitive period” (Burck, 2005: 35), but many scholars feel that the age of acquiring a language is overemphasized, especially when various studies do not present clear-cut findings (Lightbown and Spada, 2001; Butler and Hakuta, 2004). “It is almost axiomatic in popular science that children have a privilege ability to learn a second language...The scientific jargon points to the presence of a ‘critical period’...[but] [s]cientific data are less definitive”⁷⁵ (Bialystok, 2001: 71-2). The same point is raised by Edwards (2004:12) and UNESCO (2010a: 15).

6.1.3 Context of language acquisition

Other factors external to language proficiency and age of acquisition can be taken into account to classify a bilingual: context of acquisition, relative status of the two languages, group membership and cultural identity, motivation, context of use. Some researchers differentiate between natural or folk bilingualism (collective bilingualism) and school bilingualism, which is also called elite bilingualism. The former is learnt through family or communication with other group members, whilst the latter is acquired in school.

6.1.3.1 Elite bilingualism

The context within which learning a second language takes place informs the type of bilingualism. Choosing to become bilingual implies different circumstances and surroundings than becoming bilingual through necessity. The first form sees “individuals who...seek out either formal classes or contexts in which they can acquire a foreign language...and who continue to spend the greater part of their time in a society in which their first language is the majority or societal language” (Valdés and Figueroa [1994: 12] cited in de Mejía, 2002: 41).

This is the case for most learners of minority languages. They add a foreign language to their linguistic repertoire and continue living their lives using their first language, the majority language. The added language to the individual’s repertoire represents an enrichment experience; in that sense, it is additive and can be transformed into social and economic advantages. This form of ‘elite’ bilingualism, also called ‘prestigious’ bilingualism (Baker and S. Prys Jones, 1998: 15, 30) concerns the educated and privileged

⁷⁵ Davies (2003) reviews different studies about the Critical Period Hypothesis.

classes within society: “upper level groups are orientated towards cosmopolitan values which makes bilingualism stimulating and enriching” (Fitouri [1983: 49] cited in Baetens Beardsmore, 2003: 14).

The reasons for learning another language can be multiple: aesthetic, multicultural, integrative for cultural awareness or for instrumental reasons to enhance future opportunities. Gardner and Lambert ([1972] cited in Hidalgo, 1986) have identified two reasons for learning a second language: integrative and instrumental. The notion of integrative motives implies that success in mastering a second language depends on the learner, reflecting a willingness or desire to be like representative members of the ‘other’ language community, and to become associated with that community. The other reason is referred to as instrumental orientation toward the language-learning task, one characterized by a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through the knowledge of a foreign language.

The integrative and instrumental motives have an impact on language use as they reflect the depth of identification of the bilingual with the language community. In an integrative context, the person’s attachment, his commitment to see the language of the community he associates with flourishing are much stronger and tend to last longer than if the motivation to learn the language is purely instrumental. The person also tends to use the language for everyday communicative functions. The important point to remember is that this type of bilingualism is essentially individual because it results from making a choice.

6.1.3.2 Folk bilingualism

The other type of bilingualism, called folk bilingualism⁷⁶ is much more common and occurs when society or part of it uses two languages for separate purposes, in cases of collective bilingualism, diglossia or migration.

The mode of acquisition of the different languages is not usually through specialized agencies like schools, but through community or family interactions, where it is an ordinary occurrence. In this context, bilingualism or multilingualism is not a deliberately sought after commodity; it is not viewed as an added skill, but as necessary for

⁷⁶ Valdés and Figueroa ([1994] cited by de Mejía, 2002: 41) adopt a different terminology. They use elective bilingualism (elite bilingualism) and circumstantial bilingualism (folk bilingualism).

participation in the community: circumstances push the individual to become bilingual or multilingual.

Social change (Haugen, 1966)⁷⁷ is at the source of numerous alterations apparent in the linguistic landscape and it also has repercussions for the prevalent practices and language use itself. With the increase in contacts and exchanges, people can widen their capacity for interactions by belonging to different networks, incorporating other ways of performing and developing their linguistic repertoire. For instance, multilingualism may arise from multilingual networks of interactions as in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the incentive to learn or acquire additional languages is due to necessity. For Edwards (2007) multilingualism is “an unremarkable phenomenon, fuelled by necessity up to, but rarely beyond, appropriately useful levels of competence” (462).

Multilingualism may also occur on a collective basis during a gradual process of political unification when the state includes several indigenous populations speaking different languages. The political construction of such a state implies an overarching institutional layer superimposed on these people; their allegiance can stay at a local level or people may wish to integrate this supplementary institutional layer, perhaps more widely recognized and operating through a different language or a separate variety (like in diglossia). This phenomenon, even if the process of adding another language to one's repertoire is individual, will happen on a collective basis; it is situational, consensual and linked to the group context.

6.2 Bilingualism and diglossia

Fishman (2003 [1967]) drew on Ferguson's (2000 [1959]) definition of classical diglossia⁷⁸ and widened its applicability. He identified a typology to classify the different instances of bilingualism, existing with or without diglossia. Bilingualism and diglossia both represent the capacity of an individual to speak two genetically different (or

⁷⁷ Haugen (1966) in his analysis of language ecology emphasizes the inadequacy of attempts to separate language from its context. When the social position of speakers of a certain language has changed, the language will also experience a change in its social meaning and use.

⁷⁸ Two related languages used for different functions (also called 'narrow diglossia' by Myers-Scotton (2002)).

historically distant⁷⁹) languages. The difference between these two concepts lies in the varieties used; they are both high or standardized in cases of bilingualism, while diglossia must include a high and a low variety of languages. The functional attribute of each language and the societal involvement are two other important criteria, which differentiate diglossia from bilingualism. Fishman (1972) insists on bilingualism as a capacity located at an individual level contrary to diglossia, which involves a group, using a low and a high variety of two separate languages for specific purposes: “bilingualism is essentially a characteristic of individual linguistic versatility, whereas *diglossia is a characterization of the social allocation of functions to different languages or varieties*” (*emphasis original* 102).

Despite this definition, many researchers typically use the two words synonymously. The confusion comes from the lack of precision in qualifying the word ‘bilingualism’. In its broadest meaning, bilingualism covers the whole topic of proficiency in two languages, whereas diglossia in the restrictive definition of bilingualism brings in the ideas of contexts and varieties within the confines of bilingualism. Baker (2003) established this difference when describing the advantages of each sort of bilingualism: the individual and the community.

“For individuals, bilingualism provides wider communication opportunities, giving access to two windows on the world and widening employment opportunities. For communities, bilingualism provides **continuity with the past**, cohesiveness for the present, and a source of collaborative endeavour for building the future” (*my emphasis* 97-8).

As previously shown, the mode of acquiring the languages also differs. In individual bilingualism, the competence is acquired through conscious input (classes, self-taught) with the person having chosen the second language he wishes to be proficient in. It is a case of individual bilingualism, a formal second language acquisition. The setting for this learning process can be at school with bilingual education or later on in life: the aim is enrichment. Diglossia perpetuates itself through intergenerational transmission or socialization. The constant integration of new speakers through intergenerational transmission gives vitality to the language and keeps at least the same number of speakers through the process of “compensation” (Dressler, 1994: 196).

⁷⁹ Kloss proposed the terms ‘in-diglossia’ (for situations where the two varieties are closely related) and ‘out-diglossia’ (for situations where the two languages are unrelated or at best distantly related) (Kloss, 1966: 138), more widely known as ‘ausbau’ language and ‘abstand’ language.

In stable diglossic situations, a whole community speaks a different language from the vernacular of the recognized standard. The family unit uses one language at home or with its contacts with the surrounding society in an informal way, whereas it acquires the majority language through formal speech events, helped sometimes by extra language classes.

Literacy is usually reserved for the high variety, because the group speaking the low variety rarely enjoys provisions for the teaching of its language. Therefore, the intergenerational transmission of the language or its vitality at community level is the crucial factor for a language in a diglossic position to survive and evolve.

Edwards (1994, 2002) emphasizes the short-lived character of elite bilingualism compared to diglossia, which he calls 'collective bilingualism': it "is an enduring quantity, unlike the impermanent, transitional variety common in many immigrant contexts, in which, in fact, bilingualism is a generational way-station on the road between two unilingualisms" (1994: 83). This is also Fishman's (2003 [1967]) view: "bilingualism without diglossia tends to be transitional both in terms of the linguistic repertoires of speech communities as well as in terms of the speech varieties involved" (364), whereas diglossia is associated with a stable and specific linguistic situation: it is "an *enduring societal arrangement*, extending at least beyond a three generation period" (*emphasis original* Fishman, 1985a: 39). Diglossia is the "stable, societal counterpart to individual bilingualism" (Hudson, 2003: 371)⁸⁰ and it is perpetuated through a societal interactive use of the language.

6.3 Crucial factors in language maintenance

6.3.1 The importance of intergenerational language transmission

Some typologies of language shift⁸¹ refer specifically to the importance of intergenerational language transmission. For instance, Fishman (1991) believes that the

⁸⁰ The intention here is not to discuss the various positions on diglossia as to why they remain enduring societal situations due to compartmentalization (Fishman, 1985: 49-50), a strong group identity (Schmid, 2001: 129, 149; Kroskrity, 2001), communicative need and symbolic representations influencing discourse and language choice (Edwards, 1994: 116; Manzano, 2003: 54-5) or to a continuous arrival of immigrants (as in the United States with the Mexicans, see Bayley and Schecter, 2002: 10).

⁸¹ For the evaluation of language vitality or degree of endangerment, see the following authors for their typology: Haugen (1972); Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977); Conklin and Lourie (1983); Haarmann (1986); Allard and Landry (1992); Edwards (1992); Fishman (1991); UNESCO (2003); Krauss (1992, 2007a).

language used in the home represents the most important factor in language revitalization with stage six, when the intergenerational language transmission is restored, being “an extremely crucial stage” (92). Language continuity within the family is also the key element upon which Krauss (1992, 2007a) bases his typology for categorizing degrees of language endangerment. To be considered ‘safe’, the language has to be backed by official support and children have to form a critical mass of speakers in a viable community, where 70% of the population uses the language at home. Similarly, the UNESCO document *Language Vitality and Endangerment* (UNESCO, 2003) identifies nine factors that grade the level of endangerment of a language, one of them being intergenerational language transmission.

For many researchers (Hindley, 1990; Fishman, 1991; Edwards, 1994, 2003; Baker, 2003; Krauss, 1992, 2007a), intergenerational transmission of the language represents the most important source of language reproduction. Romaine (1989) observes that “the inability to maintain the home as an intact domain for the use of their language has often been decisive in language shift” (42). For Dorian (1981), “[t]he home is the last bastion of a subordinate language...An impending shift has in effect arrived, even though a fairly sizeable number of speakers may be left, if those speakers have failed to transmit the language to their children” (105).

The lack of intergenerational language transmission prevents the language from being learnt naturally at home. In such instances, the average language population age usually rises and this is a strong indicator of language shift. The absence of transmission is also perceived as a sign of language death by Fishman (1991): “[t]he road to societal death is paved by language activity that is not focused on intergenerational continuity” (91). For Denison ([1977: 21] cited in Edwards, 1985: 52), “the direct cause of language death is lack of transmission to children”. Language reproduction in the family is paramount to language maintenance as the language gets used for everyday exchanges and it is more likely to be retained and used during one’s lifespan as long as circumstances encourage the speakers to do so.

6.3.2 Language socialization

Intergenerational transmission of a language, despite being an important factor, does not always ensure its maintenance, especially in language shift situations. Language

maintenance in collective bilingualism depends on the communicative value of the language (i.e. level of use) within the surrounding community. This value can be understood on two separate levels; first, the symbolic level represents the extent to which people consider the language to be part of defining their sense of identity. The second level (which will be considered here) is the actual usefulness of the language itself as a socialization tool within the community.

Some researchers have noticed that even when some parents spoke the minority language, children answered in the majority language. This leap in generation or linguistic disjunction⁸² happens when two languages are used within one conversation with the young person understanding the language spoken by the older speaker but replying in another language. In his study of the obsolescent Arvanítika – the local variety of Albanian spoken in Greece, Tsitsipis (1989) noticed that “[m]embers of the grandparental generation usually address younger people in Arvanítika and the latter answer in Greek” (120). These language patterns also are relevant to Brittany and the Western Isles and will be developed in the discussion.

When this particular code alternation occurs consistently between speakers of different generations, it shows a language shift across generations. This situation arises when the intergenerational transmission is discontinued or in a context where the integration to the dominant society is achieved by adoption of its language. In the family unit, parents codeswitch or stop speaking their first language to their children even if they still use it amongst themselves in the home. They unconsciously establish a communicative rule of unreciprocal use of languages, which dissuades children to become fully fluent in the indigenous language; children understand it, but cannot speak it fluently.

This is connected with the language spoken within the surrounding community.

“Whenever families move into a new speech community, it is common place observation that the children adopt the local vernacular rather than that of their parents” (Labov, 2001: 423). This is echoed by Smolicz (1992) reporting his findings from a study of Welsh language and culture in Australia. He noticed that on arrival in Australia, children fluent in

⁸² Myers-Scotton calls these linguistic disjunctions “non-reciprocal language dyads” (2002: 43), and Gal “unreciprocal use of language” (1979: 110). It differs from code-switching, even though code-switching might also be observed in such a context.

Welsh “usually retained proficiency for a very short period” (289) and this despite having both parents supporting and speaking Welsh.

Calvet (1999) also believed that children prefer to speak the language used socially, the one through which they can integrate, even if knowing their parents’ language. In an inquiry conducted in 1963-64 in Senegal aimed at understanding the spreading pattern of Wolof, Calvet (1999) found that in a non-dominant Wolof-speaking area, many primary school children without Wolof-speaking parents considered Wolof to be their first language. This finding showed how language choice is embedded into the current social context, which is more influential than the familial unit for language selection. “Thus, it [was] not the family influence, but the influence of the surroundings that pupils [were] under. We [were] facing a social assimilation”⁸³ (*my translation* 97).

Although children may acquire or understand their parents’ model of speech, they add changes or build on it, transform it or do not speak it. They adopt the popular language because of its high vehicularity and positive value as a socialization instrument and it is likely to become the vernacular they will use. “Vernacular reorganization must take place in the window of opportunity between first learning and the effective stabilization of the linguistic system” (Labov, 2001: 423), estimated to be at the latest around the late teens.

Calvet (1999) has noticed that children “often show a psychological rejection of their parents’ language, which they understand but do not want to speak, for assimilation’s sake”⁸⁴ (*my translation* 49). A shift in teenagers’ attitude shunning the minority language has also been highlighted by Baker (1995a: 135; 2003: 100), by MacNeil and Stradling (1999-2000: ii) and many minority language teachers have noticed that for children to use the minority language as an everyday language of communication outside the classroom, “[i]t’s a constant battle” (Abley, 2003: 247).

The social rules people have internalized through their experience within the wider community impact on their language choice. Language socialization amongst teenagers (and even earlier as the Senegalese case demonstrated) is a crucial factor when evaluating language viability; it is “a particularly sensitive index of where the language is going”

⁸³ “Ce n’est donc pas l’influence de la famille, mais l’influence du milieu que subissent les élèves. Nous sommes en présence d’une assimilation d’ordre social”.

⁸⁴ “ces enfants “monolingues” manifestent souvent un refus psychologique de la langue des parents, qu’ils comprennent mais ne veulent pas parler, par souci d’assimilation”.

(Crystal, 2000: 18). It goes beyond intergenerational transmission, as it is often the vernacular reorganization at this stage that will remain into adulthood, unless other external factors such as the critical mass of speakers or questions of prestige change the vehicularity value of the language. However, “those natural collective processes (home, family, neighbourhood)...are not easily accessible to or influenced by social planning” (Fishman, 1991: 67).

6.4 The challenges of a bilingual education

When the natural channels for language reproduction such as home and community are failing, bilingual education programmes attempt to secure, reinforce or revitalize the language through using it as a medium of teaching to optimize language exposure and practice. This point reflects back on section 6.1.3.1 regarding ‘elite bilingualism’. It highlights the challenges schools face when the high variety of a minority language is used to teach the curriculum in the context of a community speaking only the low variety of that language.

6.4.1 School and the standardized variety

In schools, bilingual programmes are delivered through the standardized form of the minority language. In the strict definition of immersion programmes, the aim is for majority language children to become bilingual through target language exposure; but this type of bilingualism (enrichment) involves the high variety, a linguistic and language context different from diglossia.

In diglossic situations, the aim is different; beside language maintenance and acquiring full competence in the majority language, the aim is to allow minority language-speaking children to come out of diglossia by becoming fully bilingual in the language, of which they already speak the low variety. For such programmes to be successful, the high variety has to be added to the speech repertoire of the children without substituting the low variety, which is spoken at home and/or used as a medium for everyday communication. Their success revolves around the process of standardization and the maintenance of a diglossic situation, characterized by the continuing intergenerational transmission of the

language, the communicational needs of the people, their group organization and their sense of identity.

Yet, “[a] child’s earliest first-hand experiences in native speech do not necessarily correspond to the formal school version of the so-called mother tongue” (UNESCO, 2010b: 9). The high variety of a language is frequently considered to be too remote from the vernacular, due to a codification in search of purism, away from the influence of the majority language (see Irish and Breton in Chapter Four). When this is the case, it may alienate the minority language-speaking children and make them insecure in their native language (see above, Ní Mhóráin, 2004).

Moreover, most bilingual programmes, including immersion ones (except in Canada) mix children from a majority language background with children from a minority language background. However, their experience of the indigenous language and their expectations, together with those of their parents may be different. They have different perspectives, which are likely to affect their outlook; it is back to the enrichment versus the fully bilingual argument.⁸⁵

Another important issue already mentioned in continuing diglossic contexts is the socioeconomic background of both sets of children. One has to be aware that due to socio-historical reasons, the minority language-speaking children are more likely to come from poorer backgrounds (see previous chapter and the Oyster school). This aspect might reinforce a mental association of the indigenous language with a certain economic condition.

Further concerns regarding immersion programmes and their long-term benefit for language revitalization can be put forward. From all of the studies focusing especially on Quebec and Canada, it is undeniable that bilingual education has proven to be beneficial to English-speaking pupils for French receptive skills, “but not active language skills” (Clément and Gardner, 2001: 496). Genesee (1978: 39; 1995: 128) showed that although immersed English-Canadian speakers grammatically mastered French perfectly or very

⁸⁵ See Hickey (2001) whose article title is eloquent: ‘Mixing beginners and native speakers in minority language immersion: who is immersing whom?’. Valdés ([1997] cited in Freeman, 2008: 84) noticed that English-speaking students learning Spanish in dual-language schools were exploiting the Spanish first language speakers for their Spanish language resource. Wiley (2008: 74) also reported this “servicing” where Spanish speakers provide English-speaking children “with native speaker modelling of the language”. Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) did not recommend mixing children with different language backgrounds.

near perfection, they were having difficulties in expressing themselves in the informal French register as they possessed only the “context-reduced end of the continuum” of the school language (Cummins, 2000: 68), (see also Heller, 2003: 87-8). This was detailed in Hamers and Blanc (2000: 336, 337); French immersion graduates despite nurturing positive attitudes towards their bilingual skills did not initiate French conversation; their speech was more formal, constraining and more difficult to crack jokes in, although a few felt a greater freedom of expressiveness according to Burck (2005: 95). This shows that the learnt language (here French) was not easily integrated as a vernacular.

Similar comments have been made on secondary learners of minority languages. “These [bilingual] programmes do not generally produce highly competent active users” (Ó Riagáin, 1997: 274). This is also the opinion of other specialists: MacNeil and Stradling (2000); Harris (2002: 96). In a study on Irish, Harris and Murtagh (1999) noticed that the type of utterances of pupils mostly take the form of answers, based on the teacher-pupils format, “characteristic of language practice rather than real communication” (295); (see also Guéguen (2006) for pupils in Breton-medium schools). Löffler (2000) stated that “the relationship between linguistic ability and language use becomes especially tenuous in the case of second-language speakers” (504). In another study, Coady and Ó Laoire (2002: 153) found that 60% of the Irish teachers did not believe in the Irish revival through minority language education.

So far, no empirical evidence has been produced showing that “community bilingual education promotes additive bilinguality in minority children. [Its existence does not constitute a proof of its effectiveness]. Too many important factors, such as the existing power relations, have been overlooked” (Hamers and Blanc, 2000: 354).⁸⁶ In their conclusion, the authors stressed that “immersion programmes appear as an applicable solution for children of dominant and socially advantaged groups” (352).

Internalizing a language as one’s own involves several levels of interplay with the language: its social values of communication, its actual communicative value and its attributed value⁸⁷ according to one’s own particular experience. These interrelationships

⁸⁶ The Shaw Street in Belfast (Maguire, 1991) contradicts that argument. Nonetheless, these experiences stay at the stage of local and exceptional experiences (Edwards, 1994: 108-112). Maguire will be reviewed in the final chapter.

⁸⁷ For instance, Dorian (1981) found that “[p]arents and children agreed on the positive value of English and the negative value of Gaelic for the rising generation” (105).

are situated at a much deeper level than the mere teaching of a language, which in itself can produce adequate and even outstanding individual bilinguals (see section 5.1.4). However, unless these issues are addressed, it will only be a superficial or surface bilingualism.

6.4.2 Lack of support from some first language speakers

This surface bilingualism is happening in many minority language situations when minority language education is not endorsed by native speakers. This rejection has been witnessed in many countries, for example the USA and France.

“Why, apparently against all logic, do Californian Hispanics reject an education through their mother tongue? Minority language champions persist in telling native speakers that ‘Breton is as worthy as French’ or that ‘Creole is a highly dignified language’ – in the end, the most important thing for these ordinary people is to learn French properly”⁸⁸ (*my translation* Le Dû, 2003: 268).

Balto and Todal (1997) also explained that the introduction of Saami programmes was at first opposed by many Saamis “because they seemed bizarre and pointless” (78). The same reaction was noted regarding Frisian education with “[s]ome parents [being] even quite outspoken against their children receiving even a small number of Frisian lessons” (Gorter, 1997: 123). This was also noted by Benton and Benton (2001) for native Maori speakers who “would still opt for English-medium education if monolingual schooling in Maori were the only alternative” (438). A similar situation has been found in Scotland regarding the choice of GME (Stockdale *et al* (2003)). Again, in Paraguay and Peru, Hornberger (1987) and Romaine (2000: 48) reported that “recent attempts to use Guaraní as a medium of education have been met with resistance, just as have similar efforts to use Quechua in rural schools in Peru” (see also Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) regarding the teaching of Tlingit, which parents believed would “hinder their [children’s] advancement in English” (67)).

In Africa, many first language speakers are equally reluctant to see their children provided with a formal knowledge of their native language, let alone being taught through its medium (Calvet, 2001: 169-70). Freeman (2008: 85) cites research [Banda, 2000], which

⁸⁸ “Pourquoi, contre toute logique, semble-t-il, les hispanophones de Californie rejettent-ils l’enseignement en langue maternelle ? Les défenseurs des “langues minoritaires” ont beau ressasser aux locuteurs de naissance que “le Breton, ça vaut le français” ou que “le créole a une grande dignité”, il n’empêche que ces braves gens vont s’efforcer avant tout de bien apprendre le français”.

shows that Black Africans in South Africa increasingly demand an English-medium education for their children (see also de Klerk, 2002). This was already observed at the beginning of the 20th century by Smith ([1926: 68-9] cited in Adejunmobi, 2004), who reported that educated Africans interpreted the use of their vernacular as the medium of instruction as “the door of opportunity [being] slammed in the face of their children...So strongly do Africans feel on the subject that if their mother tongue were made the basis of education they would open private schools for the teaching of English” (12).

In the examples above, the minority language-speaking parents seek the best future for their children. From their point of view, they see an education through the minority language as a hindrance to their children’s full integration within the majority society.

In fact, minority speakers, despite using daily the low variety, often see their ‘language’ as no more than a home or community language of low status. A South African described his language Xhosa as a “home appliance” (de Klerk, 2002: 242) restricting his field and opportunities. Instruction through the medium of a minority language may be interpreted at times as an attempt to deny access to wealth and status to people from the minority language (Carpenter, 1983: 104-5-6).

Minority speakers often do not consider it as a real language and oddly, they do not link their dialect to the standard variety – or if they do, it is only to mention its deficient relationship to the standard. For instance, people speaking Tex-Mex “who would be unquestioningly identified by linguists as ‘Spanish-English bilinguals’ themselves deny that they speak Spanish, since ‘Spanish’ for them means standard, written Castilian or Mexican Spanish” (B. Johnstone, 2000: 85).

For many native speakers, a deeply ingrained mental representation links the majority language with an image of modernity and social promotion while the other language/s channelling identity is/are associated with a low market value and the past. People “interpret their own language as socially different from the new norm” (Hartig, 1985: 68). This distance, whilst perhaps not a sociolinguistic reality, is, however, perceived as a “sociolinguistic barrier” (Grillo, 1989: 200).⁸⁹

⁸⁹ This is also Fishman’s (1985c) view: “‘objectively small differences’ may yet have subjectively huge consequences and, indeed, be experienced by insiders as objectively huge” (94).

This is heightened when the standard is deemed too distant from their own spoken dialect, at which point teaching through the majority language is believed to be a safer option in securing job opportunities for their children. Therefore, it is not surprising that they consider their own variety to be a language inappropriate for conveying knowledge, especially when their spoken variety is remote from the standard. For them, “[t]he use of indigenous languages in the schools...violates the community’s expectations about education” (Romaine, 2000: 48).

The status differential is not only a linguistic problem; it mainly follows social divisions. The issue at stake here is one of security versus insecurity. Minority language speakers feel insecure about their own status, and for people in transition, the move up the social ladder is envisaged through the language used by the institutions, the language where the power lies. With the spread of the majority language, its use becomes the accepted means to communicate.

The native-speaking parents’ lack of enthusiasm or strict refusal of a heritage language education may also be associated with the absence of a link between the group identity and the language. This is the case when the language is not deemed essential to the group’s survival; all the Celtic languages are in this position.

“It is a mistake...to imagine that all communities value their mother tongue highly...If the mother tongue is not a core value to a community’s identity, or if its prestige is so low as to lead to rejection, then the linguistic rights sought by such a community are more likely to concern access and assimilation to the dominant language, with little interest in the preservation of their mother tongue” (Mar-Molinaro, 2000: 72).

Therefore, many minority language speakers prefer to choose a mainstream education for their children rather than a bilingual education. While some people with folk bilingualism are in the process of language shift and rejecting a minority language education, a new phenomenon of language revival is emerging through individual bilingualism. For instance, in the longest established Navajo language programme, only 50% of the pupils come from households speaking Navajo (McCarty, 2008). In Maori language revitalization programmes, the overwhelming majority of children are first language English speakers (May and Hill, 2005). In this context, many heritage programmes can be regarded as additive and enrichment programmes of an immersive nature.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the context in which bilingualism takes place needs to be described. The concepts of elite or folk bilingualism, despite both being called bilingualism are not similar. One emerges from a personal choice and is an acquired competence, whereas the other is circumstantial and spread at community levels with a diglossic use of the language.

Intergenerational language transmission and socialization are crucial factors for enduring diglossia. Minority language speakers enable the language to perpetuate according to their often unconscious metalinguistic evaluation of their tool of communication. Language transmission is a natural and collective process, and this aspect is vital for language reproduction.

Teaching or using the standardized variety of a minority language as a medium of education does not offer the ultimate solution for revitalizing an endangered language. Many minority language speakers do not choose to educate their children through the medium of their minority language for the reasons explained in this chapter. Their lack of interest in minority language education or language transmission is highly problematic with regards to the future collective use of the language. Teaching the minority language to children unconnected or at best remotely connected to the language raises questions regarding its internalization, its retention and use as a vernacular. Concentrating revitalization effort only on the teaching approach without considering the language within its specific sociocultural context of use could result in a surface bilingualism. It could be assimilated as inculcating elite bilingualism with the minority language becoming essentially a solely individually-based competence.

7 SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR EXPLORING MINORITY LANGUAGES

The transformation of minority languages into cultural objects separated from their context of use has impacted on the way sociolinguists perceive the language. Their underlying conceptual framework (culturally or sociologically orientated) guides their choice of policies. These frameworks should not be interpreted as presenting a strict conceptual binary distinction. Researchers operate on a continuum and can use multifaceted frameworks drawing on several disciplines; their positions might evolve over time or might even be contradictory. It is the wide-range of opinions that is represented below.

A language is a very complex concept to define due to its multilayered characteristics and usages. It is an object with social and cultural values with ideological discourses attached, as was discussed in previous chapters. It is also a medium to think with and exchange ideas, a means with which one can reason and build up knowledge. Cultural concepts are also acquired via language, which makes it an instrument of socialization and identity construction (see Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Beside its cognitive and communicative functions, a language is constitutive of the self for each individual and it plays an identifying role on a personal and social basis.

Researchers define language according to their conceptual framework and in accordance with their respective field or even with the school they belong to: anthropologists, sociologists, linguists and sociolinguists will each explain language or its social meaning with their own methods and with their own goals in mind. This is exemplified by their interpretation of the link between language and culture. Such differences are also perceptible at family level and as background to what parents want for their children in terms of language and culture.

Two major conceptual positions will be developed in this section: researchers using a culturally orientated framework and others using a sociologically orientated framework. After a brief discussion on the origin of the difference in interpretation, these perspectives

will be illustrated by examples, followed by a discussion of the arguments. Thereafter, a dialogue of argument and counter-argument will be developed to compare and contrast a number of relevant points both from stances and the synopsis will introduce the framework I chose.

7.1 The organic and diversity paradigm

Many researchers believe language diversity to be essential to the world equilibrium and that each language deserves to be nurtured. This thinking is based on the 19th century organicist ideological stance introduced by pioneering linguists like Schleicher and Bopp that languages were natural organisms and the evolution of language was linked to the evolution of man (see Joseph and Janda (2003: 6-10) and Keller (1994)). This close association led the organicists to use biological and evolutionary metaphors to describe the development of a language, starting with birth, going through a maturity period and death. This comparison can be attributed to the similar characteristics shared by the two fields regarding their diversity and capacity to evolve: “languages and species are both systems which exist and continue through time” (McMahon, 1994: 335). Both structures evolve in different ways when isolated, they are also transmitted from generation to generation and they can be classified.

This analogy is still found among many contemporary scholars, especially those adhering to the ecology-approach, linking languages with diversity of cultures, plants and animals (see for instance Haugen, 1972b; Lass, 1987: 156-7; Romaine, 1989; Baker and the flowery allegory of the language garden, 1995b: 76, 94 and 1996: 341; Mühlhäusler, 1997; Nettle, 1999: 9; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 265).

The next section presents the differences between this position, based on a harmonious evaluation of a society orientated towards multiculturalism,⁹⁰ and the sociologically orientated perspective.

⁹⁰ Multiculturalism is understood as a concept encouraging “the celebration of cultural diversity and pluralism, and redressing the inequalities between majorities and minorities” (Rattansi, 2011: 12).

7.2 Researchers' positions relating to language maintenance

7.2.1 The positions

7.2.1.1 Language and culture⁹¹

Many researchers usually regard language as a primordial element in the conception of the self. Fishman (1989) considers the mother tongue both the channel through which the soul can be expressed, and a constitutive part of it. "This soul is not only reflected and protected by the mother tongue but, in a sense, *the mother tongue is itself an aspect of the soul*, a part of the soul, if not the soul made manifest" (*emphasis original* 276). The "beloved language...[is] flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone" (Fishman, 1997: 91). This idea is linked with the belief that the mother tongue, especially when it is a minority language, occupies a privileged and even a primal position in people's make-up; this belief intensifies when the language is endangered. The language is often branded as the language of the heart, through which the feelings and emotions can be fully expressed. This expressive capacity comes often with comments on an aesthetic appreciation of the language and its uniqueness. "RLSers [Reversing Language Shifters] should view local cultures (all local cultures, not only their own) as things of beauty, as encapsulations of human values which deserve to be fostered and assisted" (Fishman, 1991: 33).

Language and culture are often treated as interchangeable concepts with language acting as a means to transmit culture while being at the same time a part of it. "Language and culture are often inextricably linked. We can think of language as 'culture-soaked', cultural concepts are embedded in language and its use, as well as language being signified as carrying cultural identity" (Burck, 2005: 23). Many researchers think that the "destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity" (Fishman, 1991: 4) or even that language transcends culture, as asserted by Adegbija (2001): "[g]lobally, language is the dynamite of thought. If you kill or render impotent a people's language, you can as well kill the people, but if you effectively plan or develop a people's language, you are laying treasures that can affect eternity" (298).

⁹¹ The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which posits that thinking is affected by the language one speaks will not be mentioned. For more on this topic see, for example, Lucy (1992), Gumperz and Levinson (1996) or Bennardo (2003).

This link between nature, diversity, culture and language bring some researchers to yearn for life prior to the consumption society, a position deriving from the Romantic movement: “without romanticizing or idealizing the indigenous cultures it is clear that they are superior to mass culture because their members retain the capability of living in at least relative harmony with the natural environment” (Salimen [1998: 62], cited in Edwards, 2002: 39).

For Baker (2003), language represents the repository of a culture with its death leading to the disappearance of a particular world interpretation; “[a] language contains a way of thinking and being, acting and doing...[, therefore] when a language dies its vision of the world dies with it” (92). Dixon (1997) is of a similar opinion: “[e]ach language encapsulates the world-view of its speakers...Once a language dies, a part of human culture is lost – forever” (144). In effect, these authors believe that culture and language are inextricably linked. This position entails that a change of language results in the disappearance of a culture when people adopt another language.

7.2.1.2 Emotional sense of urgency

This position is usually accompanied by alarmed comments on the state of the minority languages worldwide akin to the following examples: “[t]he loss of diversity in the modern world is reaching critical proportions” (Dixon, 1997: 116); it represents “the greatest intellectual disaster the planet has ever known” (Crystal, 2000: vii); “[w]hat will disappear...represents a real loss, not just for the local community but for the whole regional culture” (Dorian, 1999: 35). These researchers often exhort people to introduce urgently language planning measures. To end or reduce “this catastrophic loss of languages from the world, it is apparent that we need political action to stop language murder” (Trudgill, 2002: 144). “To halt this catastrophe facing most of the world’s languages and cultures, language action planning needs to gain momentum and importance” (Baker, 2003: 92).

In this approach, researchers often let their point of view filter through their writing, be it their frustration at reading “the appalling statistics of language shift” (Lastra, 2001: 147); they also express their hope or their moral stance often lecturing the local population. For instance, Lastra’s pain and concern are palpable when he writes about Otomí speakers,

their economic situation and their loss of competence in their ethnic language. He is saddened not only because “[t]hey are poor and less educated than the average Spanish monolingual. Their language is the symbol of backwardness, but abandoning the language is even worse because they lose their identity and their culture” (153). Shortly after, he gives examples of Otomí people with successful careers that do not speak the language and adds: “[t]hese people have no regrets, but they could have been just as successful if in addition to acquiring Spanish they had kept their former language” (154). He then “hopes that **enlightened speakers** will lead the way for the preservation of this ancient [Otomí] culture” (*my emphasis* 163). Similarly, Skutnabb-Kangas (2002a) blames, among many other things, children for their responsibility in the disappearance of languages: her conclusion “is that most indigenous and minority children in the world participate in committing linguistic and cultural genocide” (225).

Some linguists may also choose to use particularly dramatic words to depict a situation. This is how Crystal (2000) describes the way to language revitalization: “the disease to be annihilated is that of linguistic apathy or despair” (112). They might also openly criticize and blame people for not continuing to speak the minority language. “Whenever parents decide to speak to their children in the official language (often to ‘help them in school’) they doom the language in their community and at the same time they doom their culture” (Lastra, 2001: 163). Another author, Lotherington (1997) adopts the same attitude when commenting on parents switching to the majority language at home to help their children at school: “[i]n so doing, these parents perpetuate pidginized Englishes, contribute to language loss, limit gateways for cultural transmission and reduce the scope of their children's opportunities for language and literacy achievement” (93).

7.2.1.3 Language and culture within a changing society

Admittedly, it is important to preserve someone’s cultural heritage, which language is part of. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, a language constitutes a fascinating object of study. However, a language may not be treated as a museum piece, it is basically nothing when it is not activated and invested. Finally, it is a person’s choice to go on speaking a language according to his own often unconscious evaluation of the surrounding sociocultural context. Languages are “collective products that have no existence outside of language communities and which are thus dependent on the collective will of such communities” (Coulmas, 1997: 43). Coulmas (1992), regarding the decline of Ainu in Japan adopts a

realist and matter-of-fact stance with no dramatic use of language: “[w]hile it is deplored by some, it was, in retrospect, an unavoidable consequence of the Ainu’s integration into the Japanese economy and nation” (171).

For some researchers, the fusion of language and culture implies the necessity to speak the language to access the culture and that to lose a language equates to losing one’s culture, whereas others work on the premise that “there is no isomorphic relationship between language and culture, nor is language maintenance necessary for culture and ethnicity maintenance” (Paulston, 1994: 84). The Irish, despite the language shift to English, do not feel English. Languages, like behaviours, are the repository and the vehicle of culture and they represent the tangible markers which identify people who belong to a certain group or community, but this interwoven relationship can evolve as long as it is endorsed collectively. Therefore, “[l]anguage and culture do exist as separate structured entities and should be identified as such while in other respects, language becomes embedded in cultural acting as the link between cultural practices and the mental creativity of human society” (Tengan, 1994: 126).

The danger is to regard ethnicity as the most important factor in people’s lives; it can be considered as a factor of social stability or conflict, which can hide “other dividing characteristics such as class, gender...[T]he primacy of language is of course a strongly ‘idealist’ interpretation of social dynamics, implying that people attach more importance to symbols than to material conditions of life” (Blommaert, 1996: 212). This is illustrated by the following example, where a Navajo student explained to Spolsky (1989):

“if I have to choose...between living in a hogan a mile from the nearest water where my son will grow up speaking Navajo or moving to a house in the city with indoor plumbing where he will speak English with the neighbours, I’ll pick English and the bathroom!” (451).

The means are not as important as managing communication depending on the context of the interaction, taking into account the economic or status-enhancing rewards and the changes occurring within society. “Why should one want to remain Breton, backward and superstitious when the possibility existed to become a fully-fledged member of a modern, progressive and fully-civilized French society?” (Stuart Mill cited in Williams, 1991a: 6).

The attrition of a language “suggests...loss of accumulated experience and knowledge” (Edwards, 2002: 32). Edwards continues with his criticism of the theory of the ecology of language showing that it is not necessarily the case. Obviously, the non-transmission of a

language with only oral traditions to the next generation prevents the younger people from accessing material such as customs and oral literature in that particular language, but in a wider context it represents a change the group is going through, without necessarily a loss of the core values identifying its distinctiveness. “People engaged in LS may be portrayed as victims, perhaps seen as damaged or even morally reprehensible... [L]anguage shift, creolization, and ethnic mixing are in themselves morally neutral, and not evidences of wrongful destruction” (Gupta, 2002: 291).

Another area of contention reported by researchers crops up regularly: the damage the people themselves are doing to their culture by not speaking their first language – as it is highly questionable whether any sociolinguist has the authority to lecture the people themselves and judge negatively their choices. “[A]s researchers we can and must help those who wish to sustain their linguistic heritage, but we have no right to judge those who choose not to do so” (Kibbee, 2003: 56). Similarly, Blake (2003) expresses the importance of respecting the speakers’ decision to abandon their language [“the rest of us have no right to complain”⁹² (223)].

Ladefoged’s ([1992] cited in Mesthrie and Leap, 2000) also disapproves of those who criticize the choice minority people made. During fieldwork, he asked one of the consultants on the Dahalo language – a dying Cushitic language, if his sons spoke it. He answered negatively with a smile, “and did not seem to regret it. He was proud that his sons went to school, and knew things that he did not. Who am I to say that he was wrong?”(274). The same sociolinguist disagrees with the interventionist stance of language planning; it is

“paternalistic of linguists to believe that they know what is best for a language [and argues] that it is self-serving and intrinsically valuable for linguists to support threatened languages. They have a vested interest and are not neutral players in the game of language salvation” ([1992] cited in Baker, 2003: 96).

7.2.1.4 Evaluation of revitalization progress

One can also notice widely divergent evaluations of revitalization and revival programmes. Some researchers seem to be more optimistic in their assessment of language revitalization programmes. For instance, for Corson (2001) “[t]he Wesh language is already a success

⁹² Blake (2003) states that the prime responsibility is “to remedy the underdevelopment of aboriginal communities” (223).

story...Scots Gaelic is also reviving although a little less spectacular than Welsh. In Ireland, there has been a large increase in all Irish-schools, even beyond the Celtic-speaking areas of the country” (124). Spolsky adopts the same optimistic approach regarding the Maori language: it “has now risen ‘from its death-bed, revived and revitalized as a living language’” (Spolsky [1989] cited in Fishman, 1991: 236); in another article, Spolsky (2002) goes on to mention the role of bilingual education in the revitalization of minority languages: [o]ne thinks naturally of the major force that schooling was in the revitalization of Hebrew and Irish and Welsh, and of its growing role in the revival of Maori in New Zealand” (189-90)⁹³ and Baker (2007: 135) assures us that “language immersion education has shown effectiveness in Finland, Colombia, Scotland, Switzerland, Wales and Ireland”.

Sometimes, scholars appear to be especially interested in evaluating the learners’ proficiency and how successful these programmes are at instilling the language. It is obvious that learning a language through immersion can only improve the deficient or lack of mastery of a language; however, a counting exercise or a performance-evaluating study does not contribute to an understanding of the social use of the language as a collective product. For instance, Dorian (2004: 451) rejoices in showing that Faetar (a Francoprovençal language enclaved in Southern Italy) is still spoken by a few hundred people despite its death having been predicted before the year 2000. She also thinks regarding the Arizona Tewa language that teenagers, despite speaking the majority language, might choose to speak the minority language once adult (“temporal age-related shift pattern” (451)). Crystal (2000) found the case of Tewa language maintenance through his literature research “impressionistic” (128).⁹⁴

Some ‘enthusiastic’ researchers are also pushing for a revival of extinct languages, believing some could be on their way to full recovery. “It has...been shown that...unexpected examples of revival in places where languages have been believed to be long dead can sometimes occur” (Lo Bianco and Rhydwen, 2001: 413). “Revitalization and even the reclaiming of earlier minorized languages are...taking place. [People are] “reclaiming Kurna, an Australian Aboriginal language where the last speaker died some

⁹³ Two years later, Spolsky (2004) revised his optimistic approach. He also referred to the failure of the Irish state to increase the use of Irish, despite its institutional support.

⁹⁴ From the latest statistics provided by *Ethnologue* (Lewis, 2009), UNESCO (2010c) and SIL International (2009), this rush of young people learning Tewa has not occurred yet: the assessment is “shifting to English” or “severely endangered”.

60 years ago"^{95 96} (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002b: 56). Crystal (2000) also gives the example of Cornish and Manx, which have been revived. For him, even if the existence of revived languages is still insecure, they attract "precisely the range of positive attitudes and grass-roots support which are the preconditions for language revival" (162).

Many researchers (they perhaps overvalue and/or misjudge) put a lot of faith in the impact of education on language maintenance and revitalization, including Dorian (2004): "in particular immersion schooling, for the relatively rapid multiplicative effect it can produce: a handful of dedicated and well-trained teachers...can produce scores of new minority-language speakers over a period of several years" (455-6). But as seen in previous chapters, proficiency in a language does not imply regular/active use of the learnt language in the community (see Quebec and Ireland). Language instruction does not necessary lead to production or language retention; there is no "correlation between the amount of exposure to, and degree of proficiency in, L2" (UNESCO, 2010a: 28). Many studies have shown evidence of a lack of actual use of the learnt language outside the school premises (amongst many: Heller, 1999a, 1999b, 2003; Mougeon and Beniak, 1989; Jaffe, 1999; Harris, 2002).

Some researchers seem to put aside the social context within which these programmes take place. B.M. Jones (1992) argues that "high exposure to Welsh in the curriculum does not significantly raise performance of low users. That is, the curriculum cannot do the job which is fulfilled traditionally by a speech community" (103; see also Baker, 2006). Edwards (2004) also points to the inappropriateness of mixing people whose bilingualism results from growing up with those who learnt the language at school. "[L]umping [urbanite second language Irish or Gaelic speakers with native speakers] under a single 'bilingual' rubric, might give a rather inaccurate picture of the state of health of Irish or Scots Gaelic" (11) because one is a case of individual bilingualism, whereas the other case is diglossia.

An understanding of all the social factors and their likely impact is paramount. However, many researchers use only one framework to interpret their collected data and are often constrained by their own ideological approach in assessing the importance of keeping a

⁹⁵ Crystal (2000: 162) citing Wurm [1998] estimates Kaurna to have been extinct for a century. For Lo Bianco and Rhydwen (2001: 411), the last speaker died in 1929.

⁹⁶ These examples are interesting, however, I did not find any convincing evidence of the revivals mentioned.

language alive. As such, they fail to offer a long-term view of the language's prospects. For instance the "temporal age-related shift pattern" (Dorian, 2004: 451) regarding Tewa is an interesting idea. However, it remains a wish, which has not been witnessed as yet (see footnote 94) or if it has occurred at all has not had a great impact leading to a sound and secure revitalization of the severely endangered language.

Some researchers also place considerable importance on cultural artefacts, believing that re-identification with ethnic values or a positive attitude towards the language goes with the reactivation of the language. These markers do exist, but to interpret them as a sign of revival or revitalization denotes a superficial reading of a deeply complex situation fraught with power struggles, class and confidence issues. A growing number of speakers and claims of successes or expressions of interest require contextualization and hence are best explained and understood within a multilayered approach. Increasingly favourable attitudes towards minority languages and an apparent growing number of speakers cannot be used as reliable predictors of the future of the language. One remembers the aim of 100,000 Gaelic speakers for the year 2000 (Moffat [1995] cited in McEwan-Fujita, 1997), when actually, the last census (2001) showed that on the contrary the number of Gaelic speakers had dropped. For Maori, hailed as a success (mentioned earlier) the scholar Karetu fears that "his language will end up with a largely religious or ceremonial function: NZ Latin" (Walsh, 2005: 307).

In fact, "[t]he record seems to favour the pessimists [linguists] for there are comparatively few cases where language management has produced its intended results" (Spolsky, 2004: 223). Most of the time, visual cultural markers remain a tokenistic effort (for example, Maori on government letterheads, Breton flag waving, Welsh choirs in Australia, kilts in Nova Scotia, Irish dancing) with no real impact on language revitalization. A positive attitude towards a minority language and the adoption of some of its external markers do not necessarily result in speaking or learning the language. For instance, in Ireland (Edwards, 1985, 1994; Hindley, 1990) and in Brittany (Hoaré, 1999), people come out strongly in favour of the minority language, but lack the personal commitment to learn it. This inconsistency represents "*a disparity between expressed ideals and actual support*" (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1998: 67) for the language. Such shifts in attitudes might link to connectivity, awareness, a sense of belonging and attachment, but they rarely lead to full fluency in the minority language (McLeod, 2001; MacCaluim, 2007; H.M. Jones, 2008). People often defer active language learning or find it difficult to go beyond the first

stages of fluency; many invest their energy into other activities linked to the minority language, which “will not, of themselves, achieve the goal of regaining the language. These activities include traditional dancing, discussions on intellectual property, and the uses of technology” (Walsh, 2005: 300).

Researchers should therefore adopt a strong social scaffolding in their analysis and interpretation in order to be aware of their reasons, motives, and positioning as well as the interests that are guiding their investigation and recommendations in order to avoid as far as possible the pitfall of self-interest.

7.2.2 Researchers positions on minority languages and values

7.2.2.1 Language equality

The question of language equality can be divided into two sections; first, there are researchers who propose that from a linguistic point of view, no language can be considered superior to another, others will battle for people to be legally entitled to use their language in any circumstances. These two positions, both part of a similar argument, are intended to improve and foster positive attitudes toward bilingualism and the use of minority languages, along the lines of Trudgill’s (2002) plea:

“we [linguists] should also argue especially strongly that all language varieties are valuable and worthy of preservation if at all possible. We should make it better known that no dialects are linguistically inferior. That no language as such is ‘old-fashioned’, ‘backward’, ‘primitive’, or ‘unsophisticated’” (144).

This stance on language equality is linked to the position researchers take on overseeing respect for linguistic rights. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2002b), Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) brought this issue to the fore and they vehemently defend this cause, constantly accusing states of following a deliberate attempt at minority language eradication. Skutnabb-Kangas, (2002b) following Cobarrubias's (1983) classification speaks of ‘linguistic genocide’ when states are actively involved in “‘killing a language’ or, through passivity, ‘letting a language die’” (47). She believes that “[s]ome of the direct main agents for this linguistic (and cultural) genocide are *formal education* and the *mass media*” (*emphasis original*, 2002: 46). Lack of school provision in the minority language causes people to abandon their language in favour of the taught one. This is an injustice, as education through the majority language does not offer the same opportunities to the minority pupils as to the majority pupils and as such, it represents a

breach of human rights; every child should be able to be educated through his first/ethnic language.

7.2.2.2 Respect for diversity

Dorian (1998, 2004) criticizes the “European ideological bias in favour of monolingualism”. She believes that the inclination for monolingualism is part of the “ideology of contempt” (453) towards people in a subordinate position, which portrays minority languages as obsolete and unfit for purpose. She understands the need for a population to acquire a language of wider communication, but raises the question: “why, in view of both the contemporary frequency and the historical frequency of bi- and multilingualism, should speakers of smaller local-currency languages stop speaking their own ancestral languages when they acquire a wider-currency language?” (452). For her, language shift should not be considered as a “‘natural’ pattern” (443).

She believes that sustained bilingualism can be found “in settings where all or very nearly all members of a community are fully bilingual in the language of some other group” (440-1). An instance of this enduring bilingualism would be where a community uses a *lingua franca*, which it added to its language repertoire in use – although she does not provide the reader with any convincing example.⁹⁷ Her position is similar to Crystal’s (2000). For him, “[a] world in which everyone speaks at least two languages – their own ethnic language and an international *lingua franca* – is perfectly possible, and...highly desirable. Because the two languages have different purposes – one for identity, the other for intelligibility” (29). This arrangement, similar to the diglossic organization of Fishman (1972, 1985a, 1989) or compartmentalization, were it on an international scale would allow each language to be used in particular contexts; both would be relevant, mutually completing and would meet any communicational need.

Baker (1995a) also shares the point of view that two languages can live in harmony if not within society, then within an individual. Or better, “[w]ithin the evolution and the

⁹⁷ Dorian (2004) mentions sustained multilingualism for Hórom (1500 speakers) and Nsur (3000 speakers). A different analysis of the linguistic vitality of these two languages is provided by Brenzinger (2007). Nettle and Romaine (2000) note the peripheral position of Hórom compared to English (128-29). Blench (1998) emphasizes the “remoteness” of Hórom-speaking people.

development of languages within an individual and within society[, there] can be a view of bilingualism as a unified entity. Bilingualism as a language” (137).

7.2.2.3 Shift toward individual bilingualism

These views constitute innovative concepts and aim to engender positive attitudes within society towards bilingualism with an expectation to make it an inclusive part of each individual. This new approach to language located within the individual results from the break-up of core speaking areas and the development of media technology, which allows new ways of communicating. The language is neither confined nor linked to a territory: it can be located outside its original territory and used by restructured networks in either virtual or urban contexts. Examples of this include online communities, Irish speakers in Dublin or Irish learners in California – McCloskey (2001).

This new form of bilingualism is especially linked to secondary speakers of the language (as in chronological order of the learning process, which does not prevent it from being the language most used). This is already an observed phenomenon happening within the distribution of many minority language speakers. Williams (1999) explains that “culture is becoming decoupled from territory and place and recoupled to new agencies and domains in predominantly urban environment...in spheres such as education, public administration, and the legal system” (269). But is the culture ‘recoupled’ on a stable basis for its transmission and diffusion through reconstituted networks? Or are these networks limited to a chain of individuals (one plus one) having decided to belong on a part-time basis to one network here and another one there?

7.2.2.4 Language as a collective product

Although changed channels of communication must be accounted for in planning considerations in order to offer all speakers the opportunity to use their chosen language, it remains unclear if these networks will change into communities able to sustain language (re)production. Ó Riagáin (2001) states that the Irish school-based networks can recruit new members, but they are unable “to secure a permanent character that would ensure the reproduction of Irish speakers and absorb the bilingual output of homes and schools” (209). This tallies with Coulmas’s (1997) view of language when he wonders how “individual decisions about language behaviour [are] converted into collective products”

(43). This positioning also corresponds to Williams's (1991b) earlier stance, which considered that the choice exerted by individuals is framed and "structured by the wider context within which individuals and language communities operate" (320). Edwards (1994) is more critical of the significance and the impact these new speakers will eventually have, if any, on the revitalization of the minority language. Their contribution "should not be overvalued" (108), especially where it concerns children with a secondary knowledge of the minority language, as their language pattern cannot be considered stable. This includes children receiving their education through the medium of a second language.

In the case of adults, the pursuit of a language could be solely recreational and satisfy a quest for self-fulfilment. This aspect needs to be linked to the transformation of present-day society with the weakening or vanishing of collective identities and its traditional markers giving a sense of place to each person (social class, extended family, local communities and religion among others). This dip led to the fragmentation of personal identities and facilitated the emergence of individualism and consumerism. "Consumerism by its very nature is seen to foster a self-centred individualism which disrupts the possibilities for solid and stable identities" (Strinati, 1995: 239). It is within this context that popular culture and minority languages have become 'decoupled' from their original territorial basis and offered through marketing techniques as objects to be consumed. This theme was developed earlier in the thesis.

7.2.2.5 Functional bilingualism

Another angle on bilingualism is put forward by Williams (1992). He considers that it is essential to promote a functional bilingual society. Choice is paramount in a democratic society and "bilingualism both as an ideal and a social practice will reflect the contemporary socio-political currents" (24). He argues for people in a bilingual area, in this case Wales, "to embrace both languages as normal media of communication in specific domains" (24). For that to happen, he recommends that education for instance, "should be sanctioned by law...[as] principal agency for such socialization in accordance with the 'contact' rather than with the 'friction' theory of inter-group relations in plural societies" (24). In what I interpret as his ideally respectful society, education

"should not only build up fluency, competence and appreciation of the value of both languages, but also maximize the degree of individual access to both representative cultures, so they be interpreted as a joint inheritance of all Welsh citizens, rather than as mutually exclusive and competitive codes" (24).

Learning another language beyond integrative reasons gives access to a culture and enriches the lives of the bilingual and bicultural individual.

This position is an interesting one; it is respectful of language diversity and choice. However, it remains an idealistic reflection of what should happen in the best of cases, with optimum conditions for language reproduction and dedicated RLSers.

"We [researchers] have a view of a world in which there is room for all languages, where the goodness of diversity is a given, 'where the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb'. This is certainly a kinder and gentler picture, but...surely the key question is whether the desire is also the reality" (Edwards, 2002: 30).

Despite legal protection or official status, the number of active speakers can fall, examples being Irish, Romansh and Navajo. People and the choices they make are much more difficult to predict, let alone control, than the protecting and nurturing of species. Choosing to speak or learn a language is not value-free and usually behind languages, there are communities, which compete to access resources or to frame their boundaries to protect themselves. This is what Heller (1999b) demonstrated in her illuminating ethnographic work on the stakes at play in Canada between the French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians.

"The relationship is one of constant tension...In this complex and often contradictory set of relations language plays a greater and greater role. Not only is this the terrain on which borders are constructed, it is also the terrain on which tensions are neutralized, ambiguities constructed, contradictions masked. It is through language that the ideologies of nation and state are produced and reproduced" (167).

This is also Boyer's (1991) position on conflict between groups speaking separate languages, where one is in a diglossic context. This situation is usually linked to unequally shared resources and therefore is a factor of instability leading "inevitably to *conflict* and *dilemma*. Because, either the dominant language will gradually, but surely replace the dominated one...or the users of that dominated language will resist and work at normalizing it"⁹⁸ (*emphasis original* 93).

⁹⁸ "forcément *conflit* et *dilemme*. Car, ou bien la langue imposée va se substituer lentement mais sûrement à la langue dominée...ou bien les usagers de cette langue dominée vont résister et oeuvrer à sa normalisation".

7.3 Synthesis: Conceptual framework for this inquiry

Interpretation through a solely cultural framework gives a lopsided understanding of the situation of a minority language. It does not take into account the reality of the exchange society that requires a standard to facilitate communication, but it benefits from the prevailing orthodoxy of political correctness based on a belief system that is pro-diversity. Most of the points made by the culturally orientated researchers are genuine and deserve attention. They voice their concern, although this is not sufficient; the context for each language shift situation has to be laid out and analysed according to the interdependent social factors. Moreover, most of these researchers follow only one lead and the major problem with their approach is that they adopt a linguistic point of view, which is: the language comes first.

Their position is laudable and understandable, but it is the point of view of linguists, professionals who see the object of loss before the reasoning behind those who shift language. It is also easy, though at times justified (for example with the Kurds in Turkey), to go down the route of accusing the state of being responsible for the disappearance of languages due to unfair treatment (lack of institutional support or imposed teaching through a majority language). This could lead to a monolingual situation.

For Lewis (1977), "monolingualism [is] a limitation induced by social change, cultural and ethnocentric developments" (22). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) goes as far as to say that "monolingualism is a dangerous illness which should be eradicated as soon as possible" (248). Everybody would agree that it is better to be bilingual/multilingual than monolingual as it usually opens more opportunities and enhances respect for diversity; as a matter of fact, most researchers present linguistic human rights as a concept society should aim towards. The flaw in this position has been noted by Pennycook (2006):

"[l]inguistic-imperialism and language-rights discourses...construct their critical frameworks from within some paradigm they wish to critique. Imperialism is seen as a neo-colonial structure threatening the world with a hegemonic object, English, while universal language rights are seen as a global panacea for maintaining diversity... [B]oth operate from within theories of economy, the state, humanity, and politics" (68-9).

Both frameworks despite their separate epistemology and political assumptions are built on the same structural hegemonic basis with the counter hegemony of linguistic diversity and multilingualism presented as a new and better hegemony.

Even an egalitarian position cannot be dismissive of the fact that “although from a linguistic point of view all languages are equal, from a social, economic and political point, some languages are more valuable than others” (Wei, Dewaele and Housen, 2002: 4). It is a mistake to assume that each type of bilingualism is equal; elite bilingualism may be contrasted with collective bilingualism. One has also to be aware of the restrictions speaking a language known by only 500 speakers (Levy, 2003). So, all of the following factors: the social conditions of the bilinguals, the type of bilingualism, the world communicative value of the languages and the level of competence in each inform the status of the bilingual person and the surrounding context.

In fact, for Paulston (1997) “[l]inguistic human rights is a tempting and facile conceptualization for advocacy purposes, but it holds little explanatory power and may ultimately backfire in that its claims are too strong and therefore more easily dismissed” (79). Calvet (2001) considers some articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be “agreeable but completely unrealistic” (72).

So, an egalitarian stance is, from a linguistic and humanitarian point of view, fair and non-discriminatory towards minority groups, but it does not take into account the reality of the language market (Bourdieu). For Romaine (1989), languages can be considered as

“commodities...and will live only as long as they find costumers to buy them. Language competence is a skill with a market value that determines who will acquire it. The price of a language is the time and effort required to learn it, and its value is the benefit its use brings to its users...[To become bilingual] requires time and effort, which not everyone is capable or willing to spend” (283).

This latter observation lacks idealism as it stems from a pragmatic analysis of the social and economic advantages the knowledge of a language can bring. Although Fishman (1991) recognizes the impact of globalization,⁹⁹ he criticizes the idea of mainly associating a language with its rewards:

⁹⁹ “The destruction of languages is an abstraction which is concretely mirrored in the concomitant destruction of intimacy, family and community...the destruction of local life by massmarket hype and fad, of the weak by the strong, of the unique and traditional by the uniformizing” (Fishman, 1991: 4).

“The entire intellectually fashionable attempt to reduce all ethnocultural movements to problems of ‘who attains power’ and ‘who gets money’ is exactly that: reductionistic. It reduces human values, emotions, loyalties and philosophies to little more than hard cash and brute force. These misguided attempts...cannot help us grasp the intensity of ideals and idealism, of commitments and altruism, that are at the very heart of much social behaviour in general and of RLS behaviour in particular” (19).

This line of thought may be labelled ‘reductionistic’ by some researchers and realistic by others. Di Leonardo’s analysis of the American research paradigms ([1991] cited in Walters, 1996) puts forward a convincing explanation for the origin of this criticism. It is an “Americans’ historical penchant for psychologizing and [their] related reluctance to think economically about social processes” (519). These researchers give a “‘preservationist’ and ‘romanticist’ account of minority languages and their loss and the assumption of an ineluctable connection between language and ethnicity” (Pennycook, 2006: 68).

Researchers rejecting the preservationist or romanticist conception of a way forward to maintain a particular language are not constrained by their ideological positioning; the most important factor to them is the dynamic of society, with people constantly reassessing their situation in relation to the group, their desires and the available opportunities. “Pluralism does not always foster the acceptance of other groups and their life-styles if the groups are segregated. To think that cultural pluralism is a state which can persist over long periods of time ignores the dynamic nature of societies” ([Edwards, 1981] cited in Romaine, 1995: 284). Cultures, like languages, are not static entities; they evolve over time with people’s values, beliefs and experiences: “[t]he own culture is continually redefined in the process of identity construction by integrating new elements” (Hajer and Meestringa, 1992: 74).

In a way, change and continuity are part of the same phenomenon. An individual’s change of language depends on the modes of interpretation of one’s own social environment and the individual’s identity construction influences the picture that the whole group has of itself. It influences collective ideologies, which in turn are retransmitted to the members of a group. People who want to feel part of the group have to shift their allegiance whilst feeling a sense of continuity; their choice gives them their sense of identity or social existence. Therefore, a change of language does not imply a necessary loss of identity. In a rhetorical line of questioning, Adejunmobi (2004) gives the example that even if Africans

were to speak European languages as their mother tongues, “would these Africans become therefore by association ‘European’, would they begin to think of themselves as British, French, Portuguese and Spanish because they had changed their mother tongues? I think not” (53).

In fact, despite language shift, it is possible to keep a psychological attachment to the culture and the language without necessarily continuing to speak it, as Edwards¹⁰⁰ (1994, 2003, 2004) outlined, using the examples of Welsh and Irish. It could be said that a healthy culture is in a permanent stage of transition with innovations offered for evaluation to the group. Coulmas (1997) invites researchers to view those speakers who switch language “as a social group, [in the process of] the collective restructuring of the language resources, participated in by every individual...Such language adaptation processes...are damned and lamented, but not halted, only by purists and those clinging to the past” (42). Following on from this view, Calvet (2001) would, on the contrary, find it surprising for a language not to become extinct or threatened at some point as for him “every language is bound to disappear sometime”¹⁰¹ (74).

In fact, de Bot and Hulsen (2002) have analysed individual narratives and found that language speakers themselves (mostly in language shift situations) were not distraught regarding the disappearance of their language:

“the loss of the first language is not felt as a loss of identity, and many individuals do not see it as a real problem. Intentions to maintain the language and to transmit it to the next generation are rather half-hearted, and have not led to much real activity in terms of sending children to heritage language classes or even to real efforts to consistently use the language at home” (271).

Hornberger’s (1987) and King’s (2000) fieldwork on the Quechua situation supports these findings, for which two explanations are given: the shared belief that Quechua (1987: 224) will not disappear and the decontextualization the teaching of a standard Quechua presents, when it is used solely as a vernacular variety within the community (2000: 118).

¹⁰⁰ The attachment felt by the English-speaking Irish or Welsh to a “culture and an ancestry whose language they no longer possess is a psychologically real one, and demonstrates the continuing power of what is intangible and symbolic” (Edwards, 2004: 26).

¹⁰¹ “toutes les langues seront amenées un jour ou l’autre à disparaître”.

This issue of a taught artificial¹⁰² language is very common in sociolinguistic research. The pursuit of such a language policy may result in unexpected consequences, such as the alienation of the first language speakers who no longer recognize their 'own' language. A prior understanding of the language functions for the speakers must also take place. For instance, "many of the Maori people still feel that te reo Maori is essentially an oral language and should remain an oral *language*... There is no tradition of writing in Maori, and literacy is not considered a significant issue by Maori speakers" (*emphasis original* Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997: 289).

So, the extinction of a language should not be interpreted as a disaster for the group undergoing language shift, however distressing it may be for some group members. Ultimately, the group may find its own strength to express its identity through the majority language (such as the Irish) and go on with its existence. This should not prevent teaching the minority language or receiving one's education through its medium; quite the contrary, it can only bring confidence to people who speak the language in a diglossic position and make people realize the language heritage attached to one area. It is important to remember, however, that the enrichment experience cannot reproduce a collective bilingualism that is at the end of the shift continuum.¹⁰³

7.4 Conclusion

This specific inquiry has focused on one of the key factors at the core of issues associated with language, culture and heritage in two different phases of shift in sociolinguistic revitalization across two locations. Depending on the starting point, disciplinary framework and degree of emphasis on social context, almost any of the outlined approaches addressing the complexity of the processes involved where minority language choices are made could be used.

¹⁰² The adjectif 'artificial' is used to distinguish between natural and everyday language that evolve through community interactions and a standardized normative language taught in schools. An example would be dialectal vernacular Breton versus *néo-breton* (see Chapter Four).

¹⁰³ Unless exceptional circumstances are present, as with Hebrew.

However, the approach considered most effective in getting to the heart of this key exemplar issue is nearest that of the canon of the more sociologically orientated researchers. It is judged to provide a more in-depth and balanced view as regards the current situations of native Breton and Gaelic speakers and it is therefore this conceptual framework which is used to analyse the themes explored within this thesis.

8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The context in which this inquiry was undertaken provides an opportunity to examine how the choice of bilingual education by an individual family relates to language revitalization in practice. It is anticipated that this exploration will enhance understanding of previous knowledge about how minority language revitalization is conceptualized. This will be addressed through the following points, which have been developed within the theoretical framework:

Examining the patterns and key factors associated with the data gathered on individual family choices of minority language education for their children.

Relating this to the research literature and how this evidences a sociolinguistic pattern indicative of individual bilingualism.

Assessing the extent to which this may or may not be moving to a situation of collective bilingualism, highlighted in the research literature as being associated with having a much stronger impact on minority language maintenance than where language choices indicate individual bilingualism.

Continuing with the process of contextualizing the data on educational choices, individual bilingualism and collective bilingualism in terms of language maintenance and revitalization for the two minority languages at the heart of the inquiry.

Assessing how and to what extent this can be generalized across minority languages.

Showing how the differing understandings of language in relation to the wider society impact on field analysis; some approaches give priority to policies and availability of choice, whilst others analyse the rationale of social practices and try to determine if a particular pattern emerges.

The availability of opportunities to study a minority language is incontestably important. However, successful revitalization of minority languages can only be considered within a framework of collective bilingualism. Available opportunities for learning and studying do not necessarily mean that an endangered language is on its way to recovery. A boost in the numbers of speakers or potential speakers only represents a superficial view of the revitalization process and the data obtained must therefore be considered carefully. A deeper understanding of who the speakers are, and of the learners in relation to their sociolinguistic background, is necessary in order to analyse the social context within which they are likely to use the language.

In this chapter, I first identify the research questions, then describe the rationale behind the selection of the methods and the fieldwork. I also explain the definitions of some of the variables I use, before moving on to the description of the fieldwork. Finally, the limitations of the research are exposed, despite the implementation of a careful approach during the fieldwork, combined with a respect for ethical issues.

8.1 Identification of the research questions and general aims of the study

8.1.1 Research questions

This inquiry addresses a particular point in the revitalization effort, looking specifically at the parents in relation to their choice of minority language education for their children. The study is designed to identify whether there is an association between socioeconomic and cultural factors in relation to such choices and to patterns of language use, particularly within family units.

- What are the factors influencing the decision-making process of parents who chose a minority language education for their children?
- Who are these parents and how are they defined in socio-demographic and sociolinguistic terms?
- What do they seek for their children from a bilingual education?

The following subquestions are at the heart of the thesis:

- Are those parents driven by a desire to revitalize the declining language?
- Are parents interested in a minority language education because they are minority language speakers themselves? Or are they linked through their background to the minority language?
- What is their competence and how did they acquire the language? What activities are conducted through its medium?
- What is their pattern of language use at home?
- What are the perceptions of parents on the vitality of the minority language?
- How has minority language education impacted on language use in the home?
- How do parents perceive the relationship their children have with the minority language? Is it embedded in the context of language use in the family home? Or with the extended family? With their friends?
- For what reasons did they choose a minority language education? Cultural, community and/or family links? Language maintenance and reinforcement? Positive ethos? Perceived advantages? Are the parents attracted by the idea of bilingualism and see the taught language as a secondary issue? Do they seek a better education for their children through higher attainment and enhanced quality of education?

These are some of the questions that needed to be addressed in order to assess the potential impact of immersion/heritage programmes. Additional questions helped to determine the parents' motivations and to position them socially more clearly.

The collected responses to these numerous questions might not be exclusive of others; they might even present a contradictory situation. This is to be expected, and for this reason a single explanation for choosing a minority language education will not be possible to identify; the intention is to discover an emerging pattern.

8.1.2 Purpose and scope of the study

To answer these questions, a literature search, wide in scope, examined different language situations, the political frameworks accommodating bilingualism and bilingual education. It also attempted to posit why endangered languages have recently acquired an enhanced status and the reasons for parents to choose a minority language education for their children.

In the field, data was sought in order to explain the reasons behind the parents' interest in seeking an education through the medium of a minority language. Information relating to the language and the cultural background of the parental homes was also gathered in order to explore whether or not intergenerational language transmission was taking place in the families, and if it was, its scope and extent. This was completed by data covering the socioeconomic profile of the parents.

The material collected gives a perspective on the sort of bilingualism the children have acquired and the likelihood of minority language maintenance. The analysis provides a profile of the parents using the provision of minority language education and their rationale for doing so.

It is also important to highlight that, from the outset, this inquiry was not designed to be comparative. The differences between the two locations were significant, for example in terms of national position, national and local policies, populations, and patterns of current language use and perhaps most particularly, stage of intergenerational transmission. In order to establish an effective basis for using a comparative framework, it would be necessary to identify and isolate each of the factors mentioned above in order to consider them in relation to their impact on the decline of the minority language. There were undoubtedly broad factors that defined the frameworks in which the work in the two communities took place that required recognition and description, such as socioeconomic markers and the extent of community language use.

The approach taken focused more on looking at each slice-in-time set of responses, from each community, along one continuum defined by sociolinguistic markers of shift, as distinct from setting each side-by-side and taking a comparative stance. This more time-based use of such a continuum was felt to be more productive in interpreting what the responses meant for parental choice and education through the medium of minority languages. This is the reason why in the next chapter, both sets of findings are presented separately as the framework had not been designed as a comparative framework.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 Sampling

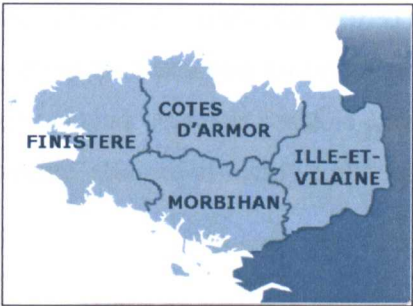
8.2.1.1 Location and background: key social factors within the wider areas of the selected locations

8.2.1.1.1 Selection of locations

Data for this study was collected in two locations, one linked to Breton-medium education and one linked to Gaelic-medium education. The fieldwork for the study of Breton-medium education was carried out during the school year 2003 to 2004 in the South Finistère area of Brittany, the location of which is shown in Figure 5. The fieldwork for the study of Gaelic-medium education was carried out during the school year 2002 to 2003 in the Western Isles of Scotland, the location of which is shown in Figure 6. The motivation for selecting these specific locations is discussed in the following subsections. This section also provides the figures I compare my sample to.



Brittany within French territory



Finistère within Brittany region

Figure 5: Geographical location of Finistère in Brittany, France

(Maps from Wikipedia)



Figure 6: Geographical location of the Western Isles (Outer Hebrides) in Scotland (CnES, 2009)

Under the ethical conditions for this study, the exact locations of the fieldwork are not disclosed in order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents since this formed a condition of the information-gathering process agreed between the researcher and study participants. The choice of locations was carefully designed to exclude as far as possible external parameters (lack of language exposure or continuity, absence of family embedding) likely to influence and skew the results of the study.

8.2.1.1.2 Selection criteria for locations

Two specific criteria were identified as critical in the selection of locations from which to sample respondents for the study. The first criterion was that education through the minority language should be available as an option within the fieldwork location and so be available as an option for the study participants to consider.

The second criterion was that the fieldwork location should exhibit strong links to the minority language, with the minority language used an everyday language within at least part of the community. This criterion was applied to ensure that the respondents who opted for minority language education could predictably have strong embedded family links within the selected

locations, representing the potential for an intergenerational continuous link with the language, culture and traditions.

Respondents were to be recruited in Breton-speaking areas, where parents could choose a Breton-medium education, and in Gaelic-speaking areas where parents could choose a Gaelic-medium education.

8.2.1.1.3 Mapping the selection criteria to locations

The selection of fieldwork locations was therefore performed by mapping the required educational provision on to the known areas of highest minority-language ability, particularly in terms of speaking competence.

For Breton, this was found to be Brittany, in France; for Gaelic, this was to be found the Western Isles in Scotland. (See maps below: Figure 7 and 9.)

In particular, strong concentrations of people with a link to the Breton language and culture were located in Western Brittany (*Breizh Izel*), which is separated from the eastern part by a linguistic boundary as clearly illustrated on the map in Figure 7 (legend: *Principale zone bretonnante*).



Figure 7: *Breizh Izel* and the linguistic boundary within Brittany

Per Denez (1998: 10)

As shown in the map in Figure 8, the percentage of Breton speakers recorded in the South Finistère area of *Breizh Izel* ranged between 10.1% and 19.9% of the population. At the time of the fieldwork conducted for this study, four primary schools in this area provided an education through the medium of Breton (*Diwan Breizh*, n.d.).

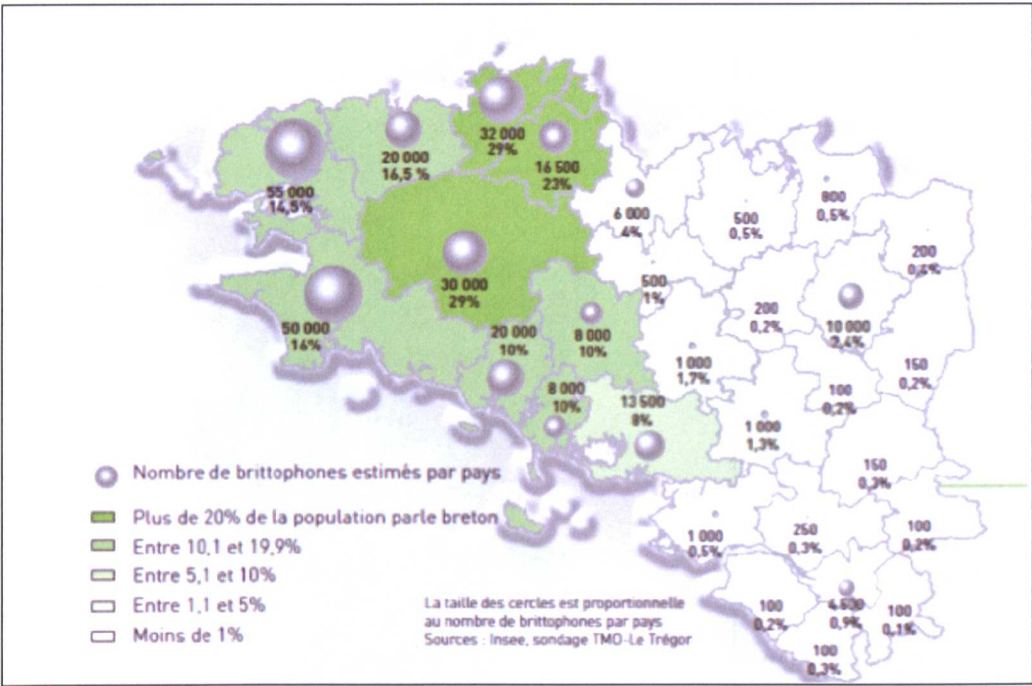


Figure 8: Areas in Brittany by estimated percentage of population who speak Breton
(Ofis Ar Brezhoneg, 2007: 13)

In the Western Isles, the strongest concentration of Gaelic speakers was to be found in the Western Isles (See map in Figure 9 below). The islands in the South of the archipelago (Barra, Benbecula, Bernaray, Eriskay, North Uist, South Uist and Vatersay) provided an average density of 66.2% of the population who are Gaelic speakers.¹⁰⁴ In addition, parents had access within these locations to four schools in which Gaelic-medium education was provided at the time of the inquiry.

¹⁰⁴ Density calculated from data extracted from original Table UV12: ‘Knowledge of Gaelic’, General Register Office for Scotland, referenced as Table 56 ‘Number of speakers in the southern part of the Western Isles’ in Appendix D.

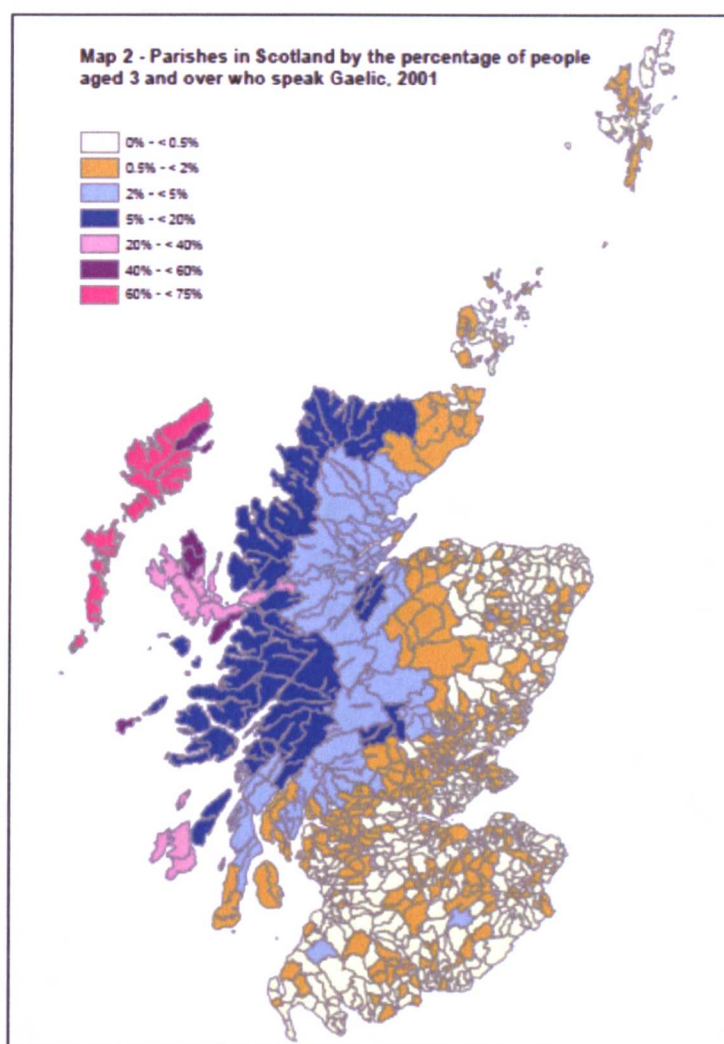


Figure 9: Parishes in Scotland by the percentage of people aged 3 and over who speak Gaelic (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005a)

8.2.1.2 Context of variation in language use within the wider areas of the selected locations

As discussed previously in Chapter Four, Five and Six, previous research has highlighted specific sources of variation in language use amongst Breton-linked and Gaelic-speaking communities in terms of variation across age groups, language variety, and social classes. The purpose of this section is to highlight these issues in order to contextualize the findings from the study reported in this thesis, which will be laid out in the following chapter.

8.2.1.2.1 Language and variation across age groups

In each of the selected locations, the minority language is in a diglossic situation positioned against another language that acts as a standard and a high variety within the wider society. In this respect, it is important to recognize that the number of speakers of Breton and speakers of Gaelic within both the respective fieldwork locations has been decreasing over time, and this phenomenon is especially manifest among the younger generations. The breakdown of language abilities across specific age groups is illustrated in Figure 10 for Gaelic within the Southern part of the Western Isles, and in Figure 11 for Breton.

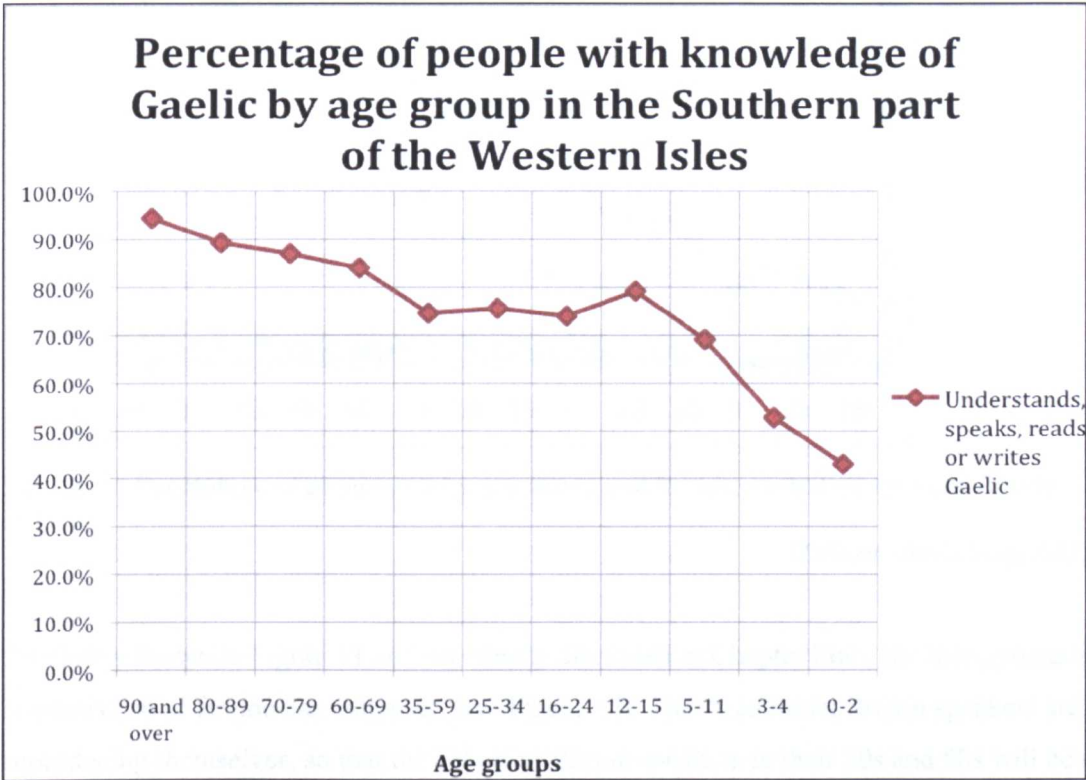


Figure 10: Percentage of people with knowledge of Gaelic by age group in the Southern part of the Western Isles
(Original figures from Table CAS206 ‘Sex and age by knowledge of Gaelic’, General Register Office for Scotland, see Table 57 in Appendix D)

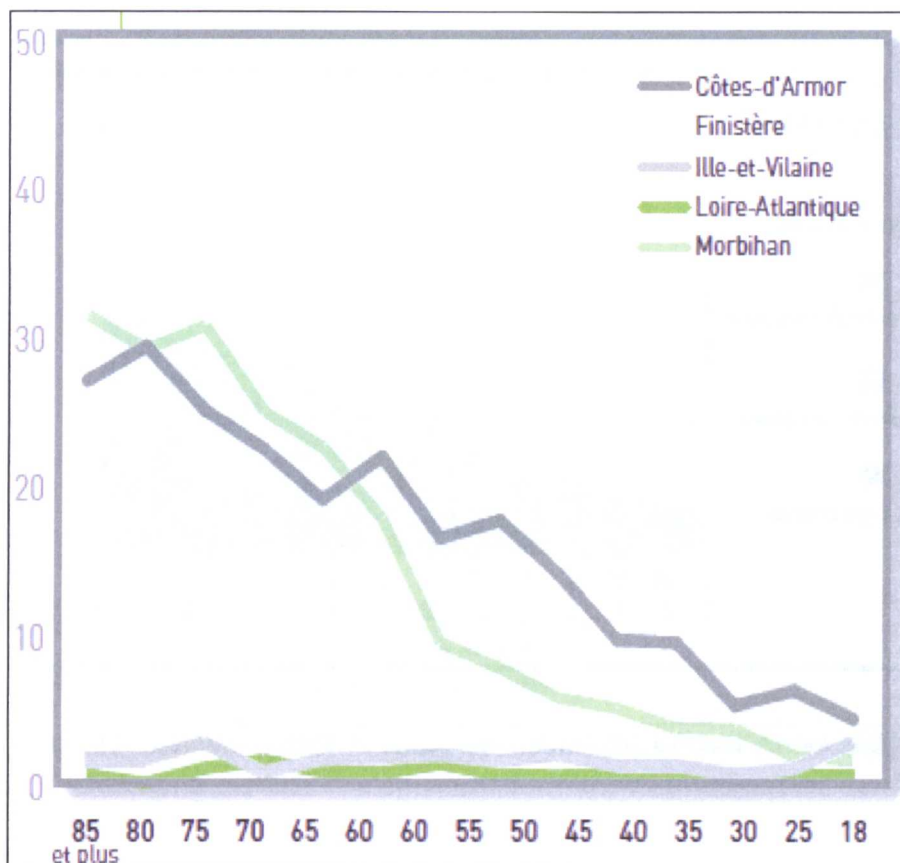
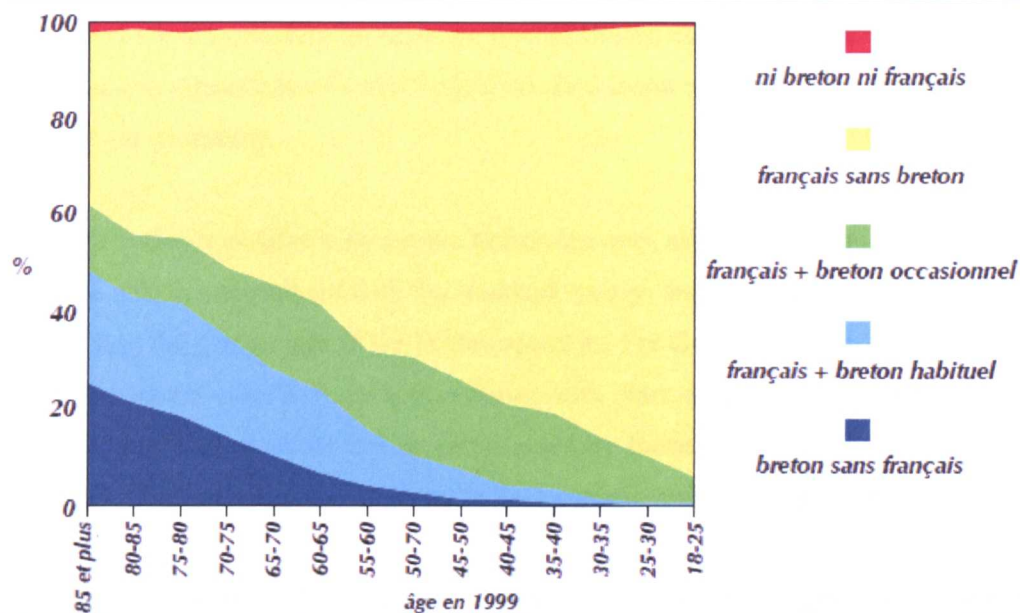


Figure 11: Percentage of population by age group and by administrative area and knowledge of Breton

(*Ofis ar Brezhoneg*, 2007: 14)

As clearly shown in Figure 11 and previously discussed in Chapter Four, the intergenerational transmission of Breton has collapsed (see Figure 12). The “traditional Breton speakers are not reproducing themselves, so that the cohort of Breton speakers in their 50s and 60s will be the last generation to have had the language transmitted to them in a family setting” (Hornby, 2005: 218). Children including those within the location selected for this study are therefore increasingly unlikely to know Breton.

Langues reçues par génération dans les trois départements de Bretagne occidentale



Source : Insee - Enquête Etude de l'histoire familiale 1999

Figure 12: Breton language transmission in Finistère, Côtes d'Armor and Morbihan (INSEE, 2003: 21)

8.2.1.2.2 Language and variation across language variety and social class

Any knowledge children have of Breton aside from intergenerational language transmission or socialization is acquired through the school system. This is similarly the case for Gaelic. This new channel through which the language is acquired is no substitute for intergenerational language transmission in terms of attainment of fluency, language use and language variety. (These points have been analysed in Chapter Four, Six; they will also be developed in Chapter Nine and 10).

The issue of language variety is especially relevant to Breton where the language taught in schools, i.e. the standard, is considered to be too distant from the spoken dialects of Breton not only by linguists, but also by the native speakers themselves with respect to syntax, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary (see Chapter Four Timm, 1980; Kuter, 1989; McDonald, 1989; M.C. Jones, 1998b; Le Dù, 1999; Quéré, 2000; Romaine, 2000).

The dialectal varieties “tend to be spoken by speakers over fifty years old who have not, in the main, transmitted it to their children” (Hornby, 2005: 192). The break in language transmission shows the lack of continuity between the type of Breton used as a vernacular in its dialectal forms and the appearance of a new taught standard learnt outside the family context and by a different social stratum.

The class divide is evident between the Breton learners, middle class language-enthusiast urbanites who are acquainted with the standard variety, and the traditional native speakers representing the greater part of the Breton speakers. For German (2007) “younger, urbanized standard speakers often have little in common with older, less formally-educated rural native speakers” (153). Most of the traditional speakers are farmers speaking dialectal varieties of Breton and they are often not involved in the language revitalization effort.

As Figure 13 illustrates, the majority of Breton speakers are in the agricultural and lower income categories of the labour market (on the graph: *Agriculteurs* – Farmers, *Artisans-commerçants* – Self-employed and shopkeepers; *Ouvriers* – Factory workers) and they are comparatively few Breton-speaking professionals (*Cadres et professions libérales* on the graph). Only a minority have been through the higher education system (Broudic, 2009a; Euromosaic, 2012).

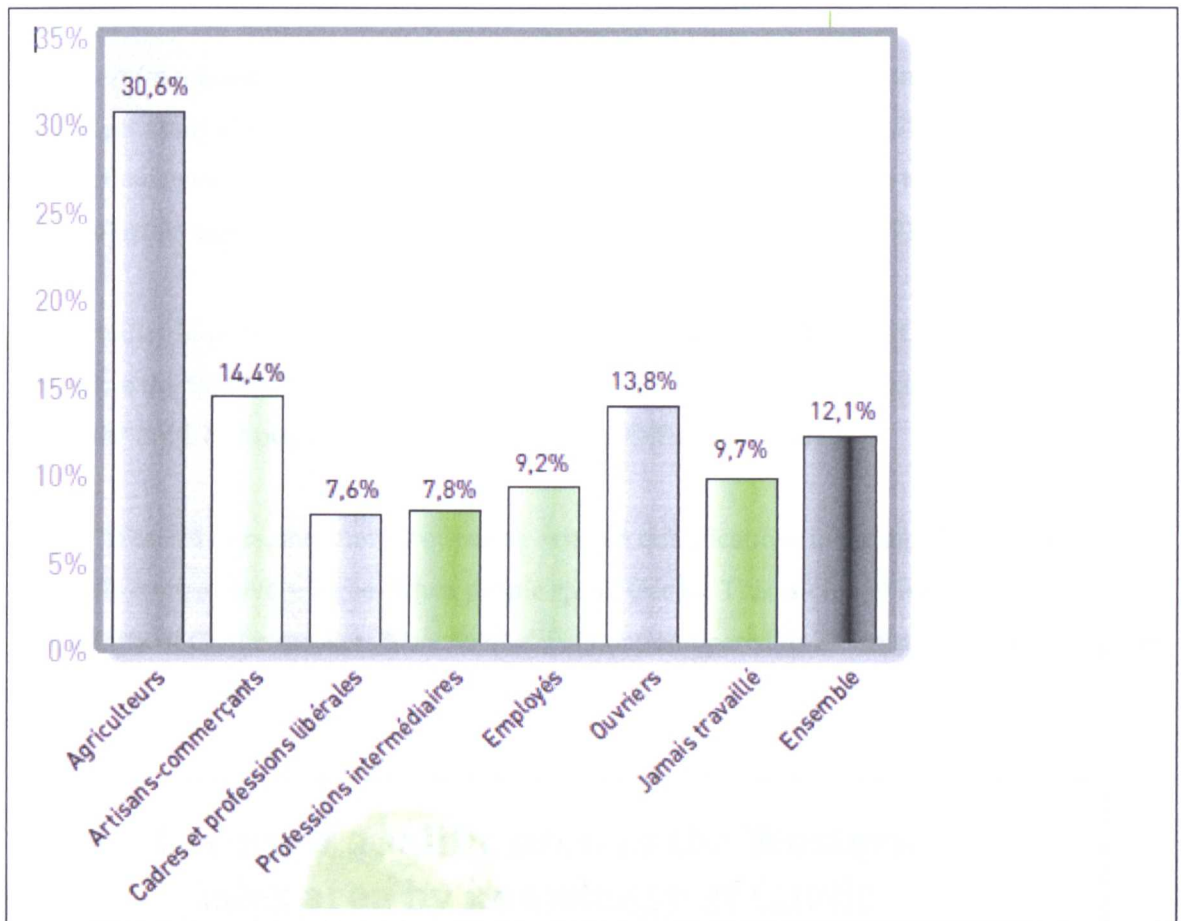


Figure 13: Adult Breton speakers and occupational categories

(Ofis ar Brezhoneg, 2007: 16)

The situation is that *néo-breton* speakers and traditional speakers are divided “in terms of their geographical location, social backgrounds, the nature of the variety they speak and even their reasons for speaking it” (M.C. Jones, 2000: 186). (See Chapter Four and 10 for more information and academic references).¹⁰⁵ This is why Broudic (2010) asks the following question: “what do we mean when we speak about the Breton language? Do we refer to the new Breton speakers who know the standard, or do we refer to the fewer and fewer native Breton speakers?”¹⁰⁶ (2).

¹⁰⁵ I will not expand on the dialectal varieties (linguistics is beyond the scope of this thesis). More information can be found in Le Dû (2001) and Wmffre (2007).

¹⁰⁶ “de quoi parle-t-on lorsqu’on parle de langue bretonne ? S’agit-il seulement des nouveaux brittophones qui ont pour référence la langue normée, ou des bretonnants de moins en moins nombreux dont le breton est la langue première ?”.

For Gaelic in the Western Isles, despite relatively minor dialectal variations from the taught standard (mentioned in Chapter 10), a similar phenomenon concerning language variety and social groupings has been observed by Glaser (2007: 260). MacCaluim (2007) speaks of a “sometimes uneasy relationship between learner and native speaker [due to fluency issues, but also to] sociological differences which exist between the two groups” (79).

Few studies have been published recently concerning the social status of Gaelic speakers, therefore the following figures dealing with that particular aspect of language use are taken from the 2001 National Census (General Register Office for Scotland).

In the Western Isles, the number of people with no qualifications in the age groups 20-44 and 45-64 is comparatively higher when people speak Gaelic. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 14; 48.9% of Gaelic speakers have no qualifications compared to 22.2% of non-Gaelic speakers in the same age group.

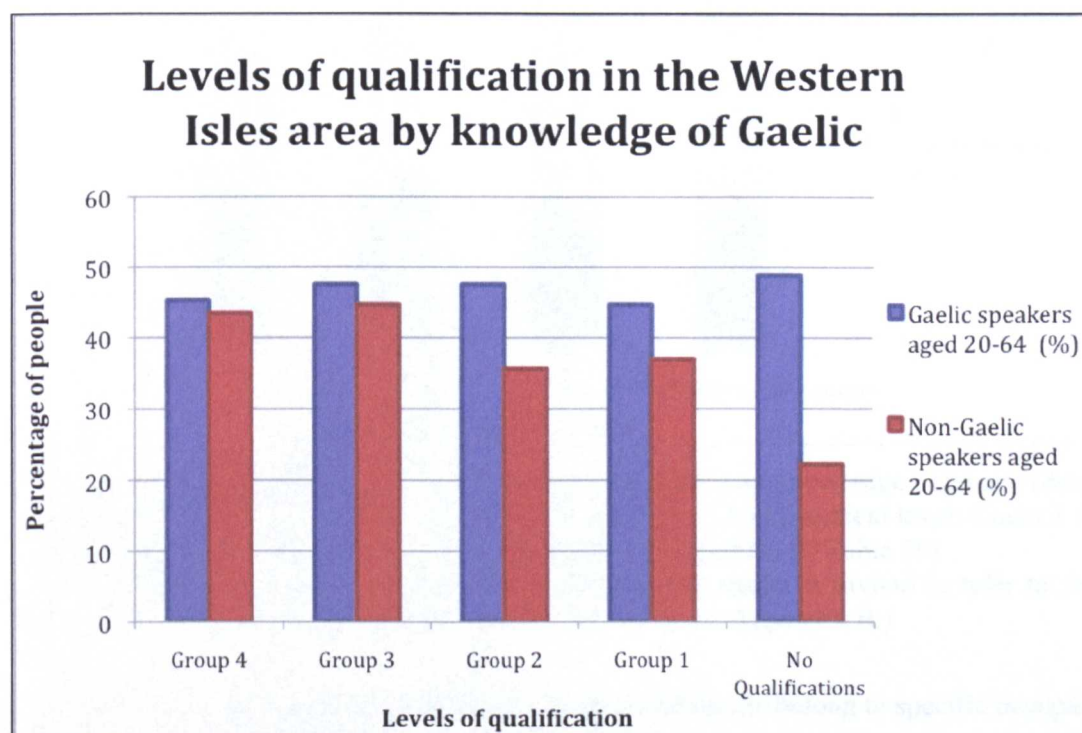


Figure 14: Levels of qualification (1) in Western Isles area by knowledge of Gaelic people aged 20-64 (percentage calculated from Table 58, Table 27: ‘Theme table on Gaelic speakers’, Geographical level: Council Area - Eilean Siar, General Register Office for Scotland, see Appendix D)

(1) Levels of Qualifications as defined by SCROL (n.d.):

Group 1: ‘O’ Grade, Standard Grade, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, City and Guilds Craft, SVQ level 1 or 2 or equivalent

Group 2: Higher Grade, CSYS, ONC, OND, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, RSA, Advanced Diploma, SVQ level 3 or equivalent
 Group 3: HND, HNC, RSA Higher Diploma, SVQ level 4 or 5 or equivalent
 Group 4: First degree, Higher degree, Professional Qualification

This imbalance is also evident with regard to the occupational status of Gaelic speakers. Gaelic speakers in the age groups 20-44 and 45-64 are comparatively more likely to work in routine and semi-routine employment sector than the non-Gaelic speakers. In the graph below, the proportions are 57.2% for Gaelic speakers compared to 34.45% for the non-Gaelic speakers.

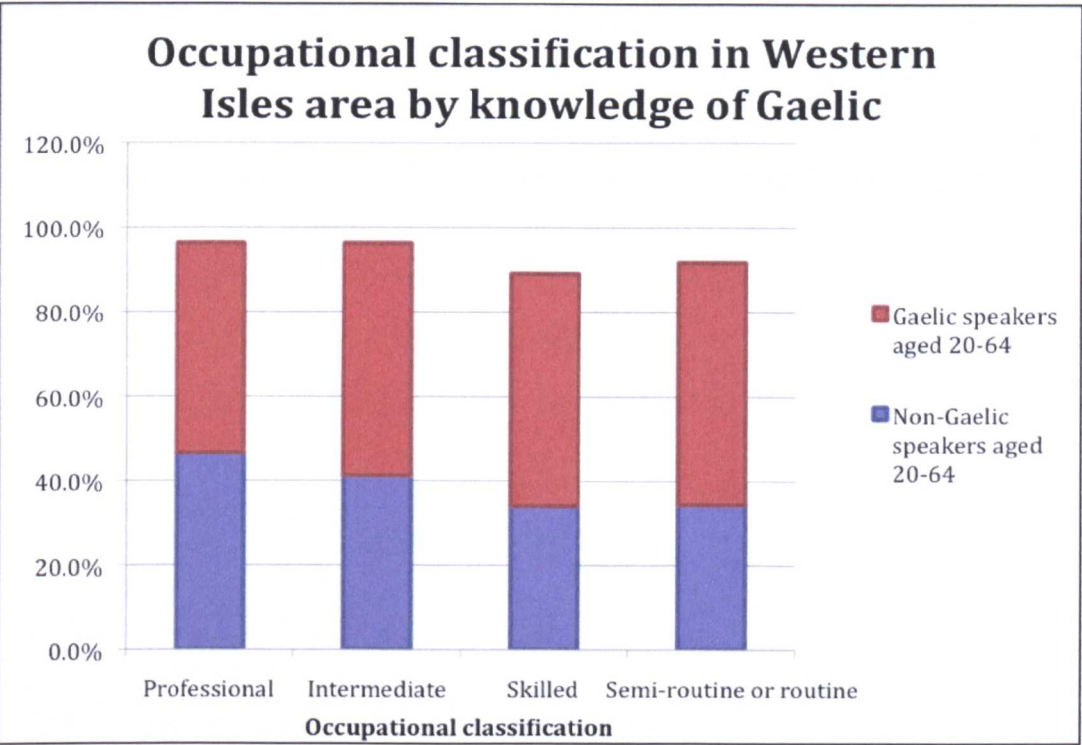


Figure 15: Occupational classification in Western Isles area by knowledge of Gaelic (data extracted from Table 27 ‘Theme table on Gaelic speakers’, Geographical level: Council Area - Eilean Siar, General Register Office for Scotland, see Appendix D, Table 59)
 (For the definition of the occupational classification, the reader is invited to refer to the point 8.2.3.2.1 Classifications for occupational classes and to the Appendix B.)

So in both areas, the majority of speakers of Breton and Gaelic belong to specific occupational classes and they do not have high levels of qualification.

8.2.1.2.3 Occupational categories in the areas of the selected locations

In both Brittany and the Western Isles, the physical geography of the location is significant in that both locations are largely rural and isolated.

In this respect, a high proportion of occupations followed by the inhabitants of the locations remained traditional, i.e. associated with the geographic features of farming, crafting and fishing (Census 2001 for Scotland and Census 1999 for Brittany).

The data relating to the selected areas in the Western Isles in Figure 16 show that nearly 10% of the workforce are either fishermen or involved with agricultural activities. This figure is over three times greater than the figure found for the same category of occupation in the whole of Scotland (55146 people representing 2.44% of the workforce in Scotland) (see Table 60 in Appendix D, General Register Office for Scotland). Other sectors like transport, health and education also constituted a significant number of jobs on the islands. (See Figure 16.)



Figure 16: Occupation by industry in Scotland and in the selected area (data extracted from Table CAS039: ‘Occupation by industry’ for the output areas and from Table CAS039: ‘Occupation by industry for the whole of Scotland’ (General Register Office for Scotland, see Appendix D: Table 60 and 61)

In Brittany, the official figures from INSEE (reported by GREF –*GIP Relation Emploi-Formation*) in the table below¹⁰⁷ show the activity by sector of the population living in South Finistère (called *pays de Cornouaille* by GREF). Fishing, farming and its derivative industry represent nearly 13% of the economic activity (*Agriculture, pêche* and *IAA*) compared to 1.8% for the whole population of France (INSEE, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ Translation of terms within table: *Agriculture, pêche* – farming, fishing; *Industrie* – industry; *IAA (Industrie Agricole et Alimentaire)* – farming-related industry; *Construction* – construction; *Tertiaire* – tertiary sector.

Table 1: Sectors of activity in South Finistère(GREF Bretagne, juin 2008: 12)

	Volume	%
Agriculture, pêche	3 860	3,4%
Industrie	21 630	19,1%
<i>dont IAA</i>	10 650	9,4%
Construction	6 800	6,0%
Tertiaire	81 100	71,5%
<i>dont Commerce</i>	17 130	15,1%
Total	113 390	100,0%

For additional information on the occupations, see point 8.2.3.2 Importance of the social class variable.

8.2.1.2.4 Conclusion

The selected locations for the fieldwork needed to be strongly linked to Breton and Gaelic respectively in order to enable investigation of whether continuity of the minority language across generations could be identified through the choice parents made for the education of their children. Locating the study in such areas would ensure a maximal concentration of parents connected to the minority language that also had the opportunity to choose a minority language education for their children. The concentration of speakers in these areas would also help to determine whether the parents that had chosen a minority language education for their children were themselves connected to the minority language through their family and whether the minority language transmission was their priority.

It was also important to be able to identify the profile of the subset of parents choosing a minority language education in these areas where language transmission had shifted from the family context as a main channel of language continuity to the school environment or was in the process of shifting.

The information in this section pertains to the population living in the selected areas and when compared to the data obtained from the sample, it would give an indication whether the parents who had chosen a minority language education were representative of the local population.

8.2.1.3 Selection of the schools

Access to parent groups who had chosen Breton and Gaelic-medium education was undertaken through the schools. This was because:

- The study was designed to interview parents that had chosen a particular type of education for their children.
- It facilitated access to the parents through the pupils, through a formal route whilst offering a safe and controlled way to become familiar with the children.

The schools of course were at the centre of the locations selected.

In Brittany, the schools selected (*Diwan*) were under a state-contract, delivering the national primary curriculum through the medium of Breton.

In the Western Isles, Gaelic-medium education provision was provided in units based in state schools, following the ‘5-14 curriculum guidelines’.

Initially, the intention had been to select four schools, two in Brittany and two in the Western Isles. However, unforeseen difficulties, which will be explained below, meant that only one Gaelic-medium unit provided the locus for supporting access to the parents.

Three schools fitting these criteria were selected: one in the Western Isles in Scotland and two in the western part of Brittany.

8.2.1.4 Selection of parents

Western Isles and Brittany

Though the differences between the two communities in which the research was undertaken were too great to make this a comparative study and especially factors likely to impact on language maintenance were not isolated to enable a measure of their influence on each language situation, it was considered helpful nevertheless for the parent samples in both communities to have children in similar age-ranges.

In Brittany, children begin their formal education at the age of six in CP after having spent usually at least three full years in a school nursery (in this case a Breton nursery), always located within the school. It is considered as an integrative part of the primary curriculum. Classes CP to *cours moyen 2ème année* (CM2) in the *Diwan* schools in Brittany roughly correspond to the age-range found across Primaries 3 to 7 in the Western Isles, although in both locations, composite classes of wide-ranging ages was the norm. Also, I preferred not to select the Primary 1 and 2 parents in the Western Isles as their choice of minority language education might still be changed to mainstream education and especially, it corresponded better to the age of the Breton children.

From these selected age-ranges in the selected areas, all parents were invited to take part in the research.

The fieldwork focused specifically on parents living in particular kinds of communities who had made particular kinds of educational choices relating, at least on some level, to the minority language associated with where they lived and where their children went to school.

Using the two stratifications of location and age-range of children outlined above, the sampling process could be described as purposive or criterion-based. Large numbers were not sought because the inquiry was conceptualized as being exploratory and the method chosen was labour intensive (see below). Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that greater numbers would have provided a better-founded base for interpretation and generalization.

8.2.1.5 Accessing the respondents

8.2.1.5.1 Gaining administrative consents

In the Western Isles, consent to access the schools' parent-list, and to obtain the support of the school in making initial contact with the parents was obtained from the designated personnel from the relevant local authorities. This was followed by obtaining consents from the headteachers of the selected schools. Consents were also obtained from the teachers of the relevant classes, as well as from headteachers.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ The role of gatekeepers in gaining access to participants for studies is, of course, known to be critical. In this respect, I feel privileged to have been granted the necessary authorization from the local authorities to identify the socioeconomic status of the parents of the children enrolled in Gaelic-medium education. Other researchers such as Fraser (1989:232) have previously reported difficulties in gaining access to this type of data. Consequently, I

In Brittany, the administrative layers were reduced. I obtained the authorization from the *Diwan* Head Office to negotiate directly with the headteachers. In The Western Isles, this process resulted in different headteachers' responses in each of the two schools selected and this had an impact on the fieldwork.

In one of the two schools, the headteacher took control of the process of accessing parents, without regard to the original course of action envisaged for the conduct of the inquiry. The gatekeeper, in this case the headteacher prevented me from directly accessing the parents; he sent letters to parents asking them if they were willing to participate in an inquiry; parents had to opt in. In the end, this way of proceeding was so counter-productive to parental involvement that the focus moved to the second of the two schools. A combination of constraints including the time-factor meant that parents in only one school community were involved in the process.

8.2.1.5.2 Getting to know the children

Formal consent for access to the schools was followed by a period of orientation in the classrooms (usually three full days) and getting to know the children, even though my study focused primarily on parents. Apart from enjoying the experience of mixing with the children without being too much a source of disruption in the classroom, I felt that observing and getting to know them would be helpful to the process of gathering data.

The letters about my research forwarded to parents in order to invite them to participate in my research were therefore seen to come from a familiar source (see Appendix F).

This pre-fieldwork carried out with the children and the close contact established with the teachers was an enlightened choice as it attracted a positive response from the parents for their participation in the study (contrary to the other Gaelic-medium unit, where I was not authorized to proceed in a similar fashion).

do not assume that I will always be granted access to this type of data for any future studies expanding on my work. It is interesting to pose the question of how best we as a research community can communicate to gatekeepers such as local authority representatives the benefits of being able to access to socioeconomic data in studies of minority language education.

8.2.1.6 Number of respondents and response rate

8.2.1.6.1 Number of respondents

What this sampling base provided was the following:

51 households were involved across the two locations divided as follows:

- 29 households in Brittany;
- 22 households in Western Isles.

Base number and description of groups on which tables in the analysis are reporting	Brittany	Western Isles
Respondents who were interviewed: PARENTAL HOUSEHOLDS (parent couples or parent-respondents)	29*	22*
Numbers involved where respondents who were interviewed provided information on themselves and their spouses/partners: PARENTS	58	44
Numbers involved where respondents who were interviewed provided information on their and their spouses' parents, i.e. the children's GRANDPARENTS	116	88
Numbers involved where respondents who were interviewed provided information on their children	29	22
Respondents who were interviewed: TEACHERS	3	2

- (When only one parent in the household was available to be interviewed, the responding parent provided details on the spouse from that household for occupation and educational levels, language skills and language usage. A majority of the interviews were conducted with both parents present).

In terms of response rate, this equated to:

- 29 households in Brittany giving 29 parent couples (i.e. 58 individual parents) from a total of 29 households on the school roll of the selected classes in the chosen schools in Brittany, i.e. a response rate of 100%;
- 22 households in the Western Isles giving 22 parent couples (i.e. 44 individual parents) from a total of 25 households on the school roll of the selected classes in the chosen unit in the Western Isles, i.e. a response rate of 88%. (Three households refused to participate in the study).

8.2.2 Data Gathering Approach

8.2.2.1 Rationale for the selection of research methods

The present inquiry combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods. It sought focused data in a systematic approach in areas by which the respondents could be defined. The respondents were parents who had children educated in minority language schools or units. Quantitative data was obtained using structured questions, which lent themselves to a discrete set of predefined answers (for example, occupation and language abilities).

A sole quantitative approach for this study was considered to provide superficial data without offering an understanding of the social context surrounding the minority language situations. The inquiry needed to be exploratory, grounded where possible in the overview of the respondent and embedded in the world of the parent making minority-language schooling choices. The topic areas for the data had to be broadened to encompass a wide range of responses the participants associated with minority language and particularly their decisions in this area. This would provide qualitative data, and would be obtained using open-ended questions within an interview schedule.

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach was needed to uncover aspects that had not been predefined or in other words to “excavate and interrogate the common sense and the naturalness which underpins individual reasoning and practices” (Ball, 2003: 3), rather than a broad understanding of surface patterns.

Although the interviewer had some established general topics for investigation, this method allowed for the exploration of emergent themes and ideas rather than relying only on concepts and questions defined in advance of the interview. The same set of questions was asked to all participants in order to make possible a degree of comparison between answers. The advantage of this method was the scope for pursuing and probing for novel, relevant information, through additional questions. The interviewer could ask supplementary questions in order to follow up leads that emerged during the interview.

“Qualitative interviews are often used in an exploratory manner which seeks to investigate the subjective interpretations of social phenomena. They do not necessarily presume that most of the topics of interest are known in advance. The aim is often interpretation and understanding of

how and why, not ‘fact-finding’ or getting answers to questions of how much or how many” (Economic and Social Data Service, 2011). It is a valuable research method for exploring “data on understandings, opinions, what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common” (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 2).

Interviewing skills “involve questioning [one’s] own assumptions” (Mason, 2006: 77) in order not to invent data to suit one’s ideas or superimpose one’s meaning on to the respondents’ words. This requires the researcher to conceptualize herself as active and reflective in the process of data collection. Sensitivity is needed to avoid leading questions or suggesting outcomes, and skill is called for discovering what the interviewee really thinks; probing without overpowering.

A detailed semi-structured interview schedule was the chosen method of data collection, which enabled both approaches to be incorporated. Besides gathering descriptive data, this method offers “depth, nuance, complexity and roundedness in data, rather than the kind of broad surveys of surface patterns which, for example, questionnaires might provide” (Mason, 2006: 65).

The aim of this in-depth questioning was to explore the links between different descriptive factors and to detect the reasoning behind the educational choice of the parents. Questions designed to obtain data on patterns of language use and language abilities lent themselves to providing quantifiable information. Other factors defining the respondents, such as their socioeconomic profiles were also easily gathered. Above all, the design of the schedule enabled an exploratory and more detailed approach to be taken around issues of choice, links to heritage, attitudes to intergenerational language transmission, to education and so on.

8.2.2.1.1 Intended triangulation using teacher interviews

Some interviews with teachers were also conducted and this was in addition to the main instrument outlined above. They were designed to give supplementary information on the children, their background and especially on the language skills of the parents to triangulate with the data provided by the semi-structured interview schedule. This was sought to increase confidence in the parents’ self-reporting assessment regarding their minority language

competence. These interviews provided another complementary set of data. Five teachers (two in the Western Isles and three in Brittany) teaching in the schools or units where the fieldwork was conducted were interviewed during breaks within the school day.

Due to time constraints and other difficulties of a personal nature, the collection of data from the interviewed teachers on family language competence was assessed to be too unreliable to be used in the analysis. It was not systematically gathered for each household that had chosen to send their children to the minority language school. Therefore, data generated by these interviews could not be used to triangulate data provided by parents; the data collecting process was not of the quality necessary to support rigorous critical analysis. The interviews were judged as only being useful to provide additional information as regards teachers' perceptions of parents' motivations for their choice of school.

8.2.2.2 Design of the semi-structured interview schedule

8.2.2.2.1 Design of the semi-structured interview questions

The semi-structured interview schedule contained closed and open-ended questions, which covered educational choice, attitude, language use and social data (see Appendix A). Its aim was to gather data on parents and how this informed the literature-based understanding of social behaviour associated with minority languages and minority language revitalization, maintenance, and/or intergenerational transmission. “Theoretical concepts cannot be observed in themselves but have to be replaced by measurable constructs...[They have] to be operationally defined, and questions and statements ha[ve] to be created which [will] be assumed to measure the underlying attitude” (Zwickl, 2002: 36, 37). This set of operation definitions help to transform concepts into measurable variables (Rasinger, 2008: 21).

The schedule started with an introduction concerning the children’s activities, taking the respondent naturally through more complex issues. It focused on three distinctive key areas in the following order:

The children:

- Their language acquisition, proficiency and use.

The parents:

- Their reasons for choosing a minority language medium school/unit.
- Their language acquisition, proficiency and use.
- Their social milieu determined by their level of education, their occupation, their social activities and their project for their child(ren)'s future.
- The geographical location of their extended family.

The minority language and the surrounding community:

- The parents' general orientation and attitudes towards the future of their area.
- Their observation of the minority language use within the community.

The English version was used in the Western Isles and the French version with minor alterations (to fit the context) was used in Brittany. I did not translate it into Gaelic or in Breton, as I do not speak either of these languages.

8.2.2.2.2 Design of the semi-structured interview procedure

The schedule was not designed to be self-administrated, but to enable a one-to-one conversation and open exchange of ideas led by the interviewer-researcher. This approach and instrument were chosen because of the following advantages:

- It helps to optimize the number of questions to which considered responses are given.
- It facilitates an elaboration in the responses, providing greater depth and richness.
- It provides opportunities to get data related to the issue and beyond the specific questions selected to guide the schedule.
- It provides “insights into the meanings which respondents attach to their actions and beliefs” (Miller and Brewer, 2003: 251), a way to let the respondents guide the researcher.
- It is directive, without overpowering the participants.
- It helps to establish a positive relationship, showing the participants that they are valued.

The interview was designed to last for a period of approximately two hours and was conducted with due regard for ethical issues and the social conventions expected of any professional gathering data in the homes of respondents. Either both parents answered my questions, at times with their children or only one parent participated, giving language data for the spouse. Each

respondent was issued with an unfilled schedule, should they have needed a visual support to refer to, as some of my questions demanded some time to reflect, namely the ones with some tables using scales.

8.2.2.3 Summarizing table of semi-structured interview schedule

Approach: Face-to-face Interviewing	
Information Gathering Tool: Interview Schedule, incorporating:	
Open-ended questions designed for: <i>Exploring</i> respondents' mind maps; <i>Ensuring</i> adequate coverage of the range of ground around the areas relevant and central to respondent thinking; <i>Enabling</i> researcher to build on and go beyond initial areas of perceived information needs.	Questions with structured responses* designed for: <i>Gathering</i> of systematic responses to researcher-identified topic-areas of critical interest.
List of areas covered by the open-ended questions: Choice of school. Advantages and disadvantages. Projection for their children's future. Minority language and the surrounding community. Parents' general orientation and attitudes towards their area and its future. Parents' definition of culture. Perception of the minority language. Reasons for interest in the minority language. Parents' observation of the minority language use within the community and projection for its future. Description of language use.	List of areas covered by the more structured questions: Detail on children. Link with other parents. Predefined answers for school choice; about the importance of the minority language, about culture. Link to the minority language. Language acquisition, proficiency and use (household, individuals within the households, children and grandparents). Level of education, occupation, social activities Geographical location of extended family. Link to area.
Numbering the open-ended questions: 11; 13; 14; 15; 16; 19; 20; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 29; 31; 32; 33; 48; 51; 55; 56; 57.	Numbering the closed questions: 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 12; 17; 18; 21; 28; 30; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 45; 46; 47; 49;

		50; 52; 53; 54.
Qualitative data emerging from open-ended questions		Quantitative data emerging from the questions with structured responses*
Analysis from open-ended questions in the schedule: Thematic and content analysis	Analysis from initial grouping of themes from open-ended questions: Frequency counts of <u>respondents</u> on basis of identified themes; Ranked analysis of most commonly-held <u>responses</u>	Analysis from structured questions in the schedule: Frequency counts and cross-tabulations on factors defining: Respondent; Respondent's spouse; Respondent's parents and parents of spouse.
Interpretation: Providing descriptions on views/positions of <i>respondents</i> ; Providing understanding on the basis of pattern of <i>responses</i> (respondents giving a range of responses to question)	Interpretation: Helping to highlight the dominant features of parental choices and the thinking behind them	Interpretation: Clarification of the social and linguistic factors defining the respondents, including linguistic, heritage descriptors

*It is important to mention that each of the more structured questions provided respondents with the opportunity to provide additional responses in their own words. This gave an additional qualitative dimension to the data.

8.2.2.4 Capturing quotes and clarification on the scale measuring language competence

8.2.2.4.1 Capturing the interview responses

I did not tape the interviews. Most parents did not feel at ease with the idea; my view was that it would have been a distraction making them self-conscious. In any case, I was not a linguistic researcher in need of an exact discourse to analyse. This did not necessarily have a bearing on the richness of the collected data as Powney and Watts (cited in Arksey and Knight, 1999) “have found, that ‘one of the most basic rules of interviewing is that the most interesting material emerges when the recorder is switched off’” (52).

The drawback of this technique lies in the accuracy of taking fieldnotes taking and especially of capturing the respondents' words to be used as quotes. I took great care in reproducing some of the exact spoken words of the participants. Some of these sentences or groups of words are quoted in the analysis. The sentences I managed to capture during fieldwork are short due to time-management, as I had to write and keep the flow of the conversation going at the same time, so that the interview experience could be as enjoyable as possible for the respondents. I transcribed as much as I could of their speech; I have my own shorthand system and my mnemotechnic way (trigger) to remember the exact moment when the participant spoke. This is not a proof of accuracy, but when I am in active listening mode, I treat the spoken words of the respondents with the greatest respect. To be as accurate as possible, after each interview, I systematically looked at the semi-structured interview schedule, filled the gaps or remembered a point expressed by the respondent(s), completed the words half-written and rewrote some quotes in an understandable form for future use. I also added post-its on the semi-structured interview schedules with additional information the respondent(s) gave me. Quotes also needed to illustrate fairly the viewpoints of the respondents; their selection had to be representative of a qualitative balance of the whole set of topics and in this work, the themed-analysis guided the editorial choice of inserting some of the quotes in the PhD.

It is paramount for fieldnotes to be "in close proximity to the 'field'. Proximity means that fieldnotes are written more or less *contemporaneously* with the events, experiences and interactions they describe and recount" (*emphasis original* Emerson *et al* cited in Mason, 2006: 99). This technique that I systematically followed, was successful in being as accurate as possible.

Moreover, I had an in-depth knowledge of my semi-structured interview schedule; I knew the questions and their order nearly by heart; the interview schedule had become part of me, so that I could maintain good eye contact allowing me to receive and give appropriate feedback to the respondent(s) and fill the schedules with the respondents' words. Each parent gave me information, so I considered it my duty to give back some of my time and my knowledge on the language situation when an interest was voiced. This approach helped to build an enjoyable and rewarding relationship based on cooperation.

8.2.2.4.2 Clarification on terminology dealing with language competence

Definition of scale applied during this study

The scale dealing with language competence is derived both from the experience of the previous fieldwork I had conducted for the previous inquiry on the same topic and from other scales that other researchers had selected. During the fieldwork, respondents were required to identify their own level of fluency in the minority language. Therefore the categories had to be clear and free from jargon. The descriptors needed to be short and easily understood as I was reading them aloud to the respondents from my semi-structured interview schedule; the headings were also visible on a blank schedule in front of my respondents during the interview. The descriptors also needed to apply to the four skills: reading, writing, understanding and speaking, in order to establish a consistent basis for each respondent to use when evaluating his/her level in each of these skills. Table 2 shows the scale used for this study when evaluating language competence in Breton. The same scale was used when evaluating language competence in Gaelic.

Table 2: Scale used to measure the four skills

Levels of Understanding/ Speaking/ Reading/ Writing
No Breton
Few words and sentences
Restricted messages
Reasonably well
Nearly everything

The bold dividing line in the middle of this table separates the non-fluent (above) from the fluent Breton speakers (below).

Descriptors explained:

- **No Breton:** no skills in the language beyond a few words.
- **Few words and sentences:** very basic ability in the language. Beginner's level.
- **Restricted messages:** basic ability in the language. Can provide family information and convey concrete needs.

- **Reasonably well:** can interact with confidence in the language on a variety of situations and subjects; feels limited in some areas and that own language skills could be improved.
- **Nearly everything:** can speak fluently in a spontaneous manner without some degree of constraint; can cope with most or all situations; native or near native competence.

Summarizing table

Table 3: Descriptors for Language Skill Levels (Applicable to Understanding; Speaking; Reading and Writing)

Descriptions of Language Skill Levels (Explained to Parents during Interviews)	Choice of Category for Parents' Self Description (Selected during Interviews)	Rough Categorization of Fluency and Non-fluency (Used at Analysis Stage)
No skills in the language beyond a few words	No Breton/Gaelic	Not fluent
Very basic ability in the language; beginner's level	(Can manage a) few words and sentences	Not fluent
A basic ability in the language; providing family information and convey concrete needs	(Can manage) restricted messages	Not fluent
Ability to interact with confidence across a variety of situations; feeling limited in some areas and that own language skills could be improved	(Can operate) reasonably well	Fluent
Ability to speak fluently in a spontaneous manner without some degree of constraint; can cope with most or all situations; native or near native competence	(Can handle) nearly everything	Fluent

(See the table above for the meaning of the bold dividing line.)

My scale fitted the purpose of being applied to each skill and it was descriptive enough for each respondent to be able to pitch his/her level. Linguistically, it was perhaps not the most perfect, but it suited the aim of the thesis and the respondents clearly recognized the categories. I only needed a rough guide to gauge their language level, which would indicate their ability to communicate socially in the minority language.

The suggested distinctions between intermediate learners, native speakers, near native speakers and upper intermediate learners would have been difficult to put in place. First of

all, I am not a speaker of either of the languages, so it would have been inappropriate for me to seek such information as I would not have been able to answer their questions or give any clarifications and even for the respondents themselves, it would have been problematic for them to place themselves on such a scale.

Relationship to other scales

The categories defined in the scale I used for this study can be mapped to those defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, n.d.) as shown in Table 4 below. As highlighted in this mapping, the principal difference between the two scales concerns the use of the ‘intermediate’ and ‘upper intermediate’ categories. These alternative categories were not used in this study as I considered the distinction to be unclear to study respondents. I have used only five categories instead of six in the CEFR scale. In particular, my scale offers no match to CEFR category B2 since I wanted the parents to be able to establish clearly if they belonged to the fluent or non-fluent category as indicated by the dividing line in my scale.

Table 4: CEFR scale aligned with my scale

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)		Categorizations Used in This Inquiry Corresponding to CEFR
Levels of Usage	Additional CERF subcategories	
~	~	No Breton/Gaelic
A: Basic User	A1: Breakthrough or beginner	A1: (Can manage a) few words and sentences
	A2: Waystage or elementary	A2 B1: (Can manage) restricted messages
B: Independent User	B1: Threshold or intermediate	B2 C1:(Can operate) reasonably well
	B2: Vantage or upper intermediate	
C: Proficient User	C1: Effective operational proficiency or advanced	C2:(Can handle) nearly everything
	C2: Mastery or proficiency	

For more information, the reader is invited to refer to Appendix E where the descriptors used by the CEFR are explained and where other scales are introduced.

Scales previously used to measure levels of Gaelic

Other research (Stockdale *et al*, 2003; Johnstone *et al.*, 1999) on similar topics used scales with fewer categories to measure language competence (see below).

Language Competence
Native/ Fluent
Understands but seldom speaks/ Learner
No Gaelic

(Stockdale *et al*, 2003: 26)

Language Competence
At least fluent
Basic competence
Very little fluency

(Johnstone *et al.*, 1999: 57)

Clarification on the use of ‘Nearly everything’ category in my scale

The use of the category ‘Nearly everything’ needs to be clarified. The essential point here is that nobody can ever be fully fluent. For example, one might be a native speaker at ease in most situations but unaware of a number of neologisms. One might be a learner at ease with the high register but less at ease with a more familiar register or a local variety. Upper intermediate learners and other categories may encounter similar types of gap in their competency.

In this sense, the scale I have applied is consistent with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which uses in its description of the categories: “virtually everything” (see below). The wording is fairly close to “nearly everything” (my category):

“Can understand with ease **virtually everything** heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously,

very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.” (*my emphasis*, Council of Europe, n.d.: 5)

I was especially interested in transmission, not in highly precise data on linguistic levels. I was interested in getting data on operational levels of communication in the four skills and this is what the scale I used has provided.

Language transmission and native speakers

The language situations are complex and it is challenging even for speakers themselves (especially in Brittany) to judge how much of the minority language they have acquired from the intergenerational language transmission as opposed to their language acquisition through a course or at school if they had studied it at some point (adulthood, childhood...). The assessment of each respondent of his/her own level of transmission is highly subjective. Perception cannot be measured by a blanket scale. Therefore, I have analysed intergenerational language transmission by means other than self-report, for which it would have been impossible to devise a meaningful scale to gauge the level and type of language received from the previous generation.

Language transmission has been analysed through quantitative data running across three generations:

- Grandparents (secondary reporting)/ Parents-respondents (first hand reporting)/ Children (secondary reporting)

I have compared the first language of the parent-respondents with the first language of their own parents to evaluate the occurrence of language transmission and reproduction. I have also measured the respondents' ability (Speaking and Understanding) with respect to their own parents' language background. Moreover, I have analysed at length the level of transmission occurring from the grandparents' generation to the parent-respondents.

The level of transmission was studied and evaluated with respect to the language background of the grandparental household where the parent-respondent grew up:

- Transmission when there was one grandparent that had the minority language;
- Transmission when there were two grandparents with the minority language

- Transmission when the grandparents did not have any background in the minority language (this point was relevant as regards the level of community transmission and/or on the acquisition of the minority language by having learnt it at school or through courses; this was analysed only for the Gaelic fieldwork as community levels of concentration of Breton speakers were thought to be too low to lead up to the transmission of the language).

Language transmission has been analysed in many tables and graphs for Breton, the titles of which are reproduced below:

- Mother tongue of the Breton parents (data obtained for 58 parents);
- Grandparental households according to their first language (data obtained for 116 grandparents);
- Understanding ability of parents according to their language background (data obtained for 58 parents);
- Speaking ability of parents according to their language background (data obtained for 58 parents);
- First language of the respondents compared with their parents' first language (data obtained for 58 parents);
- Respondents' Breton language ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (all Breton respondents) (data obtained for 58 parents);
- Respondents' Breton language ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (grandparental household with one native Breton speaker) (data corresponding to 8 parents);
- Respondents' Breton language ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (grandparental household with both parents native Breton speakers) (data corresponding to 17 parents);
- Language transmission and respondents with two Breton-speaking parents (data corresponding to 17 parents).

In the analysis, referring to the Gaelic fieldwork, similar tables or graphs are found, although the inquiry is more precise as it looks in detail at language transmission from the grandparental households to the respondent mothers and the respondent fathers. Language reproduction is analysed separately via the maternal line and paternal line.

- Respondents' grandparental households according to their first language (data obtained for 44 parents);

- Parents' understanding ability according to language background (data obtained for 44 parents divided in three groups of 13, 8 and 33);
- Parents' speaking ability according to language background (data obtained for 44 parents divided in three groups of 13, 8 and 33);
- Parents' reading ability according to language background (data obtained for 44 parents divided in three groups of 13, 8 and 33);
- Parents' writing ability according to language background (data obtained for 44 parents divided in three groups of 13, 8 and 33);
- Mother tongue of the parents of the children in GME (data obtained for 44 parents);
- First language of Fathers and Paternal GRANDPARENTS (data obtained for 22 fathers and 44 grandparents);
- Fathers' grandparental households according to their first language (data obtained for 22 fathers);
- Fathers and language reproduction according to language background (data obtained for 22 fathers);
- Fathers' Gaelic language understanding ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (data obtained for 22 fathers divided in three groups of 6, 3 and 13);
- Fathers' Gaelic language speaking ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (data obtained for 22 mothers divided in three groups of 6, 3 and 13);
- First language of Mothers and Maternal GRANDPARENTS (data obtained for 22 mothers and 44 grandparents);
- Mothers' grandparental households according to their first language (data obtained for 22 mothers);
- Mothers and language reproduction according to language background (data obtained for 22 mothers);
- Mothers' Gaelic ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (grandparental households with at one Gaelic-speaking parent AND grandparental households with both parents speaking Gaelic) (data obtained for 15 mothers corresponding to that category divided in two groups of 5 and 10);
- Mothers' Gaelic ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (neither parents speak Gaelic) (data obtained for 7 mothers corresponding to that category).

8.2.3 Analysis

8.2.3.1 Statistical package

The quantitative data (obtained from the structured questions asked systematically of all respondents) was coded and analysed using spreadsheet software (Microsoft Excel 2008). This quantitative analysis provided data on:

- The educational and occupational positions of the parents.
- Their leisure habits.
- Their sociolinguistic background, language proficiency and use.

Themed-content analyses (using the same software) were used with the qualitative data around key areas of interest and provided data on:

- The cultural, sociolinguistic and social contexts of the use of the minority language among the household and within the community.
- The parents' reasons for choosing a minority language education.
- The parents' perception of the minority language.

8.2.3.2 Importance of the social class variable

In order to identify and group parents sharing similar characteristics, I chose to classify them according to their socioprofessional category. For Aron (1992), the socioprofessional position occupied represents a source of information on three levels. First, it objectifies a community through its ways of working and living (work and salary), which more importantly at its core shares a value system and ways of thinking. Second, its durability through time shows its consistency, especially when social mobility is limited. Finally, it involves the emergence of a collective consciousness, despite each person performing tasks on an individual basis.

For Bourdieu (1990), cultural capital and educational attainment are crucial aspects used to categorize people; they are transmitted intergenerationally, thereby creating social reproduction. Class is considered both as an act of social construction, as well as a product of the objectivist division of labour. In this context, practices and choices need

to be considered to have a meaningful value within a particular field where structuring principles and processes are in operation, working like an economy. Practices help to situate the individual socially.

The social location of each parent was assessed through questions relating to their level of qualification, along with their employment status. Supplementary information was asked in order to evaluate as precisely as possible the parents' social status.

8.2.3.2.1 Classifications for occupational classes

For the occupational classes, the objective classification by category selected is provided by the Office for National Statistics.¹⁰⁹ It lists nine occupational groups:

Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC 2000 Major groups) (ONS, n.d.)

1. Managers and senior officials
2. Professional occupations
3. Associate professional and technical occupations
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations
5. Skilled trades occupations
6. Personal service occupations
7. Sales and customer service occupations
8. Process, plant and machine operatives
9. Elementary occupation

I chose to group the nine categories into four main categories (see Table 5):

- Managerial, senior and professional occupations (1 and 2).
- Technical, administrative and intermediate occupations (3 and 4).
- Skilled trades and service-based occupations (5, 6 and 7).
- Routine and manual occupations (8 and 9).

¹⁰⁹ Scotland's Census Results Online (SCROL) applies the same grid to categorize occupational classes.

Table 5: Table format used for socioeconomic classification in analysis (Western Isles)

Socioeconomic position of parents (occupation-based)
Professional
Intermediate
Skilled
Manual (semi-routine & routine)

For the Breton side of the inquiry, the scale was slightly adapted to match the figures provided by the national statistical French agency INSEE. The categories ‘Business owners’ and ‘Farmers’ were added. The scale consisted of six categories (see Table 6). Explanation of the transposed occupational scale from French to English can be found in the Appendix B: Understanding the occupational scale in Brittany).

‘Professional’: *‘Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures’;*

‘Intermediate’: *‘Professions intermédiaires’;*

‘Business owners’: *‘Artisans, commerçants et chefs d’entreprise’;*

‘Skilled’: category combining *‘Employés qualifiés’* and *‘Ouvriers qualifiés’;*

‘Unskilled’: *‘Employés non qualifiés’* and *‘Ouvriers non qualifiés’;*

‘Farmers’: *‘Agriculteurs exploitants’.*

Table 6: Table format used for occupations in analysis (Brittany)

Classified Occupations
Professional
Intermediate
Business owner
Skilled
Unskilled (semi-routine & routine)
Farmer

These classifications of categories were followed throughout the inquiry for The Western Isles and Brittany (for which, it was slightly adapted as explained above).

8.2.3.2.2 Occupational classes: Comparing my sample with figures from the surrounding area.

Figures for the specific output area of the sampling location in the Western Isles

For the Western Isles, the figures obtained from the 2001 census for the specific output areas under investigation were used to compare the parents' occupational levels.

These were:

- Table CAS039: 'Occupation by industry' (All people aged 16 to 74 in employment the week before the Census, General Register Office for Scotland)
- Table KS12a 'Occupation groups' (All people aged 16 to 74 in employment the week before the Census, General Register Office for Scotland).

Both tables classify the population by its occupational groups. (See table below.)

Table 7: Occupation groups and percentages in selected island locations

POPULATION IN EMPLOYMENT	N	%
ALL PEOPLE	470	100
1 Managers and Senior Officials	44	9.36
2 Professional Occupations	45	9.57
3 Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	51	10.85
4 Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	31	6.59
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	115	24.47
6 Personal Service Occupations	49	10.42
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	19	4.04
8 Process Plant and Machine Operatives	53	11.28
9 Elementary Occupations	63	13.4

(Extract from Table CAS039: 'Occupation by industry', All people aged 16 to 74 in employment the week before the Census, General Register Office for Scotland, see original extract with N column only in Appendix D, Table 62) (Geographical level: islands selected for fieldwork)

Tables KS12a and CAS039: 'Occupation by industry' were believed to be incomplete as the number of unemployed and inactive people was not accounted for. Another table from General Register Office for Scotland was used to retrieve these figures. Table CAS032 'Sex and age and level of qualifications by economic activity' (All people aged 16 to 74, islands selected for fieldwork) grouped those into economically active and economically inactive. The unemployed (part of the economically active category) represented 5.41% of the total population aged 16 to 74. People looking after home/family, permanently sick/disabled and

other (part of the economically inactive category) amounted to 16.72% of the total population aged 16 to 74.

Figures for the specific area of the sampling location in Brittany

The figures for the table below come from INSEE obtained from the census carried out in 1999. The table below was used to compare my findings with the figures from the surrounding population living in South Finistère.

Table 8: Distribution of economically active category according to occupational status

	Effectifs en 1999	%
Agriculteurs exploitants	4 340	3,8%
Artisans, commerçants et chefs d'entreprise	9 540	8,2%
Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures	10 460	9,0%
Professions intermédiaires	25 060	21,6%
Employés qualifiés	14 830	12,8%
Ouvriers qualifiés	19 300	16,7%
Employés non qualifiés	16 480	14,2%
Ouvriers non qualifiés	15 730	13,6%
Total	115 750	100,0%

(GREF Bretagne, juin 2008: 23)

In the whole of Brittany, the unemployment rate was 9.5% and 3.6% were economically inactive. These figures were obtained from the graph of Moro source INSEE (2008: 14).

In my sample, in both areas, I had no full-time students and no unemployed parents; the unwaged were categorized as ‘Unwaged’.

(For more detail, see Appendix B: Understanding the occupational scale in Scotland and in Brittany).

8.2.3.2.3 The levels of qualification

The levels of qualification were broken down into five main groupings:

- a. University
- b. Further education
- c. Higher Grade Qualifications and equivalent
- d. Apprenticeship
- e. No Qualifications

Figures for the specific output area of the sampling location in the Western Isles

For the Western Isles, the scale used by the General Register Office for Scotland to analyse the 2001 census was utilized. (Additional information can be found at Scotland's Census Results Online 'Definition – Highest level of Qualification'.) The official table and the figures used for comparing the levels of qualification was the Table UV25 outlining the figures for the output areas (see table below). The figures specifically related to the selected locations where the fieldwork took place.

Table 9: Table used for comparing the qualification levels of my respondent sample with those of the surrounding population

UV25 Qualifications (Scotland)						
All people aged 16 - 74						
Geographical level : Inhabited Islands						
	ALL PEOPLE	No qualifications or qualifications outwith these groups	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
SUMMARY	831	362	175	106	43	145
	768	335	163	96	40	134
	63	27	12	10	3	11
Footnote:						
1 Highest level of Qualification is defined as:						
Group 1: 'O' Grade, Standard Grade, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, City and Guilds Craft, SVQ level 1 or 2, or equivalent.						
Group 2: Higher Grade, CSYS, ONC, OND, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, RSA Advanced Diploma, SVQ level 3 or equivalent.						
Group 3: HND, HNC, RSA Higher Diploma, SVQ level 4 or 5, or equivalent.						
Group 4: First degree, Higher degree, Professional Qualification.						

The categories in the table below were used to classify the qualification levels of the parent sample in the Western Isles. (See Table 11, for the equivalent table used for the Breton fieldwork.)

Table 10: Table format used for comparing qualification levels in Western Isles

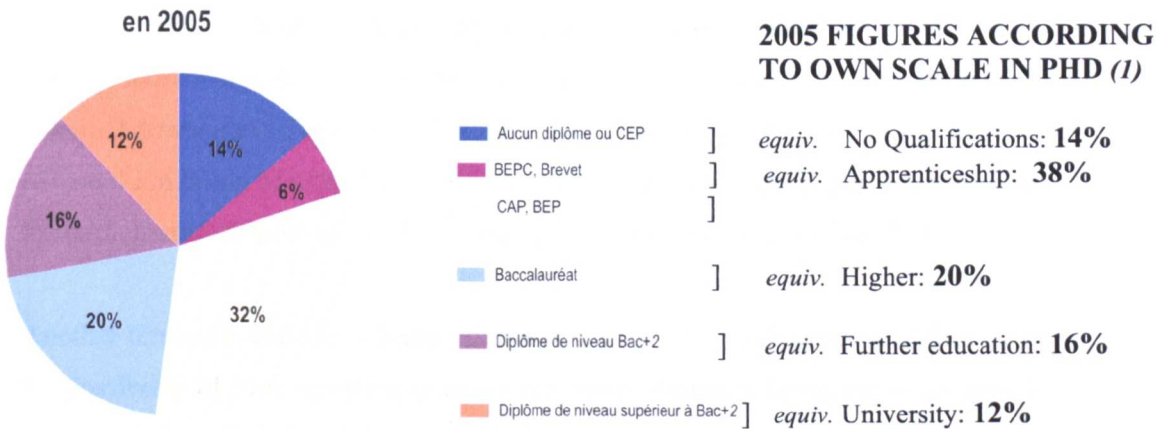
Parents by highest level of qualification
University Degree
College Diploma
Scottish Higher Grade Qualifications and equivalent
'O' Grade
No qualifications or outwith these groups

Figures for the specific area of the sampling location in Brittany

For Brittany, the figures used as a basis for comparing levels of qualification within my sample with the ones of the population in Brittany were the official figures from the inquiries (1999 and revised in 2004, 2005 and 2006) carried out by INSEE (2008). (See Appendix C: The levels of qualification.)

The figures did not relate specifically to the output areas where sampling took place, but to the whole of Brittany (see Figure below). The figures released for South Finistère were not enough detailed to be used to compare my sample (See Appendix C: The level of qualification and the point ‘Table for the specific area and issue with the number of categories’.)

Répartition de la population active bretonne par diplôme



Source : Insee, recensement de la population en 1999 et enquêtes annuelles de recensement 2004, 2005 et 2006
(my rearranged legend INSEE 2008: 15)

Figure 17: Breton population by level of qualification

(1) The equivalence scale does not offer a perfect match, it is simplified and drawn up for the purpose of providing a straightforward comparative tool. The reader is invited to refer to Appendix C, point ‘Figures, translation and scale’.

Table 11: Table format used for comparing qualification levels in Brittany

Levels of Education
University degree levels
Further Education qualifications
Baccalauréat ¹¹⁰
Apprenticeship
No Qualifications

¹¹⁰ Qualification corresponding to Scottish Higher Certificate or equivalent.

8.2.3.2.4 Other economic classifiers

In many surveys, the fact that the respondent is a homeowner is an indicator of social profile. I deliberately chose to drop this marker because I did not consider it to be significant in either of the areas where the research was conducted. The reasoning behind this choice lies within thecrofting system in place in the Western Isles, as a result of which many parents were owner-occupiers. In Brittany, the fairly low prices of houses until recently meant that most parents were also owner-occupiers.

8.3 Downsides of methodological choices

8.3.1 Limitations of the semi-structured interview schedule

In order to maintain the quality of the study data, it was critical to remain aware of the potential downsides of using the approach of a semi-structured interview schedule. One potential limitation of using this approach is possible misinterpretation in transcribing the participants' responses, so the utmost care was taken to avoid this pitfall.

Another limitation was the self-reporting aspect of the parents' language abilities with the possibility of over-reporting or under-reporting, although during the interviews, I had descriptors of the levels to help with the classification, should one of the respondents have had difficulties in giving an answer (see point 8.2.2.4.2).

In-depth interviews are a skilful task to master; a proper balance linking the data collection and the researcher (her personality, frame of mind, framing of questions) are paramount for the success of a productive and valid interview. During the open-ended questions, the interviewer assumes the position of researcher and subtly controls the direction of the interview. The researcher seeks to extract cultural material, by using "repetition to clarify subjects' responses...[and] encourages subjects to expand on their responses" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989: 92).

For qualitative in-depth interviews, the "researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's meaning perspective, but otherwise respects how the

participant frames and structures the responses...the participant's perspective on the social phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989: 83). The researcher must keep in mind personal interaction and biases in order not to collect and manipulate data to justify the researcher's position.

Though "[o]bservations are not always (and may never be) completely trustworthy, so we need ways of ensuring that we are doing all we can to observe from different perspectives and in different ways" (B. Johnstone, 2000: 37). Triangulation by methods or sets of questioning on a similar topic enriches the amount of raw data and might provide avenues to understand or explain contradictory statements in interviewee responses. It is essential to remember that informants have several identities ('impression management' according to Goffman, 1969) and they can display the one that is the most socially acceptable to the researcher. Not only might the respondents feel like pleasing the researcher by answering the question the way they think would vindicate the research (the acquiescence response set) but they might also be influenced by "the spirit of the times, which may or may not be favourable towards multiculturalism in society" (Broeder and Extra, 1999: 24). Thus, a cautious approach to the gathered information is required.

For de Singly, "one should not listen to the representations people give about themselves [but] explain what subjects do by what they are, and not by what they say about what they do"¹¹¹ (*my translation* 1992: 21). A priori, this quotation appears to lack respect for the respondents, in making clear that a researcher's findings carry more weight than the individual's own reflection. In fact, it is at this point of conceptualization that the path between the respondent and the researcher separates. The analytic process using constructive structuralism and the theory of habitus outlined earlier "offer[s] a powerful analytical tool for interpreting data" (Lamarre, 2003: 63). This meta-level of data has to be carefully constructed in a manner strictly governed by the rule of research as regards to ethics and interpretation.

An external observer guided by constant and valid parameters can discover the reason(s) motivating a choice, once she has understood the way respondents rationalize a decision

¹¹¹ "il ne faut pas écouter les représentations que donnent les individus sur eux-mêmes [mais] expliquer ce que les acteurs font par ce qu'ils sont, et non pas ce qu'ils disent de ce qu'ils font".

they can partially express. Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond the comments and reflections a respondent makes about his choices in order to find another explanation, one that often remains at the unconscious stage for the respondent. For Snyders, it is “the unveiling of the mystified conscience...The person[’s attitude], what he says and thinks he feels, and what he really ends up feeling have not to be taken at face value: it is necessary to go beyond, till underpinning the conditions that caused it”¹¹² (1976: 179). This process can change the insight one possesses of a phenomenon and discover unidentified or partly conscious motives, although this approach has to be carefully monitored by the researcher in order to comply with ethical rules and ensure validity.

8.3.2 Validity and reliability

The quality of the research is determined by the validity (internal and external) and the reliability of the inquiry. It is crucial to question the subject selection, instrumentation and the sample for the internal validity conducting of the study. As for the external validity, this concerns the possible generalization of the results. The reliability – also called transferability – is assessed according to the consistency of the results obtained; it is a measure of the accuracy of the conducted research. If all of these parameters are satisfied, reproducibility/confirmation of the research can be asserted when findings are confirmed by another study.

The qualitative nature of this study presents weaknesses affecting the issues of validity and reliability, although a set of carefully constructed questions and interviews conducted within the scientific framework of social sciences add soundness and authority to the collected data.

8.3.2.1 Representativeness and number of schedules

The selected populations of parents share the same characteristics in the sense that parents have chosen a certain type of education for their children; the selected schools are representative of rural schools in small communities linked to the minority language.

¹¹² “le dévoilement de la conscience mystifié...[L’attitude de l’] acteur, ce qu’il dit et croit ressentir, et ce qu’il arrive à ressentir ne constitue pas un terme premier, se suffisant à lui-même: il est indispensable de remonter au-delà, jusqu’à l’aperception des conditions qui l’ont suscitée”.

However, no claim for a general representativeness of all the parents having chosen a minority language education for their children can be made, for several reasons.

The main shortcoming stems from the size of the sample: 51 sets of parents (29 in Brittany and 22 in the Western Isles). This number might not be extensive enough to allow for a sound reliability, but studies conducted on the same topic and within comparable locations might show an emerging pattern with the replication of findings.

The use of only one method (the semi-structured interview schedule) offered only one source of data, which has not been triangulated by any other method; the number of teachers interviewed was too small and not systematically-linked to the cohort of parents. No children were interviewed to confirm the observations the parents made regarding their children's use of the minority language.

These constraints impose a limitation on any claim to a possible generalization of the results yielded by the inquiry.

The standard of evidence presented will strengthen the internal validity of the research. The detailed description of the fieldwork I gave so far helps to evaluate the careful approach I adopted and it will stand as evidence for public scrutiny, coming from the participants and the wider research community alike. The time spent with each interviewee allowed for building a rapport based on trust and openness, giving the respondent scope to express their views. The data collected following a methodological and transparent process has been carefully transcribed, analysed and considered for inconsistencies. The findings, the analysis and the conduct of the inquiry (or "thick description" (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 54)) are clearly laid out for the reader to evaluate.

In turn, this will impact positively on the external validity of the research. Instead of validity, some researchers speak of trustworthiness and authenticity. "Trustworthiness (the qualitative researcher's alternative to validity) is the true value of a piece of research. Qualitative research is trustworthy when it reflects the reality and the ideas of the participants...[It involves]: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability" (Holloway, 1997: 160).

All of these parameters safeguarding the quality of a research are fulfilled when triangulation methods are applied and when the findings can be transferred in the case of a comparable situation. In this study, triangulation was not undertaken (see point 8.2.2.1.1), but the findings provided by the semi-structured interview schedule were found to be consistent and accurate and during the analysis, careful consideration was given to biases and subjectivity. This is where the concept of reflexivity came into play.

8.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a monitoring process during which the researcher asks herself questions and considers how the answers might impact on the way she conducts the research and on the findings. It contextualizes and situates data, so the interpretation of results can be understood and related to the researcher's positioning, reasoning and progression towards the findings. Indeed, every research is partial, so it is crucial for the researcher to make "explicit the ways in which [her] account is socially constructed" (Miller and Brewer, 2003: 259). There are two levels of reflexivity.

First, descriptive reflexivity deals with the researcher considering the potential impact of various factors on the outcome of the research, for example the preconceptions of the researcher, social location of the research, power relations and so on:

"[r]eflexivity requires a critical attitude towards data, and recognition of the influence on the research of such factors as the location of the setting, the sensitivity of the topic, power relations in the field and the nature of the social interaction between researcher and researched" (Miller and Brewer, 2003: 259).

To begin with, the collected material has to be reliable and interpreted in a respectful way, especially when the researcher tries to get beyond the presented oral word. Then, the researcher has to be aware of biases: her ethnicity and nationality might impact on the answers of the respondents, as well as the perceived objectives of the questions and the pre-coded listing in the semi-structured interview schedule.

The second level is analytical reflexivity; this concept, identified by Stanley ([1996] cited in Miller and Brewer, 2003: 261) "deals with epistemological matters and knowledge claims, and requires a form of intellectual autobiography in which researchers explicate the processes by which understanding and interpretation was

reached and how any changed understanding from prior preconceptions came about”. Researchers should question their theoretical framework and methodology; not only should they be aware of their preconceptions, their values and commitments, but they should also have an understanding of their own positioning, including the vested interests they have in the topic and related broader issues.

This was outlined in the opening chapter of this thesis. I realized that “[e]pistemological assumptions determine the way in which a researcher interacts with the researched: thus they influence methods and indeed research findings” (Cameron *et al*, 1992: 5). To prevent this, I sought to be reflective about the framework I had developed and through which I interpreted the gathered data.

The first small-scale research on the same topic and cited earlier brought new insight and oriented my framework towards a completely different inquiry. By letting the parents talk, I realized that the minority language did not represent an end but a means through which they could send their children to schools they thought to be better performing on both academic and educational levels. The process through which I arrived at this conclusion is as follows: my first thoughts were that parents were especially interested in language revitalization. During that pilot-study to test my model, all the parents I met expressed their support for the language maintenance programmes. However, throughout the interviews, the main topic parents were concerned about was their children’s development. Their expectations focused principally on their children’s achievement, with the language issue being relegated to a much less prominent place when considering their choice of a minority language education. During the first interviews, I did not register this as a problem as after all, children’s development and well-being should be considered a priority to any caring parents.

Then, after many more interviews, the repetitive aspect of the parental concern regarding academic achievement started to become clear to me; it sounded as if academic achievement had become the leading factor for many parents. This presented a dissonant note in my neatly orchestrated framework. I was blinded by my own sense of responsibility and desire for the continuity of the Breton language (my ‘Breton charismatic’ period). I thought only in terms of the language and its teaching without giving any consideration to contextual factors such as the background of the parents, their fluency or lack of it in the minority language and their socioeconomic profile. The

first analysis stayed at the descriptive level, without any insight of what was at play behind the educational choice. Only a reflective approach brought to light a new angle, requiring me to revisit my views, to change accordingly my research design and to build new paradigms.

“Reflexivity is essential for qualitative research because the researcher is the main research tool; she ‘uses the self as an instrument’” (Holloway, 1997: 137). This is why it is the duty and the responsibility of every researcher to reflect and evaluate the effect of ALL of the potential biases affecting the research process and the findings. She especially needs to be aware of her own preconceived notions because

“[n]o educational research can be totally value-free, neutral or objective. The questions asked, the methodological tools chosen, decisions in analysis and manner of reporting usually reveal ideological and political preferences...Many researchers will be supporters of bilingual education, ethnic diversity, minority language rights and cultural pluralism. Such supporters may be convinced of the correctness of their beliefs” (Baker, 2001: 232),

and this conviction can affect their research findings.

A balanced and reflective approach will offer a carefully-considered interpretation of the data. However, “[e]ven after taking all these precautions, [a researcher] can never be sure that [her] interpretation is the only possible one or even the best one” (B. Johnstone, 2000: 66).

8.5 Ethical issues

Guidelines relating to ethical practice were followed.

Authorizations from the relevant bodies were obtained prior to starting the fieldwork and letters to parents were issued informing them of my aim, status and the nature of the inquiry. That same letter requested their voluntary participation in the research and also mentioned the approximate length of the semi-structured interview schedule.

During the first telephone contact, information provided for the parents included:

- The voluntary nature of their participation.
- Information about my research aim and the duration of the semi-structured interview schedule.

On meeting the parents, several points were put across:

- The need for their informed consent.
- The respect for the confidentiality of their responses and their anonymity.
- Their questions would be welcomed.
- The aims of the research were again explained.

Ethical issues were important for this thesis due to:

- The qualitative approach involving subjects.
- The small communities within which the research took place.

The identity of the contributors (parents and the wider community) had to be protected.

Whilst renaming places and people will offer a degree of protection against identification, it cannot guarantee total anonymity. Participants were made fully aware of that fact prior to the interviews. At the beginning of each interview, I presented an A4 sheet assuring them of the confidential nature of the information.

It was stated that a report at the end of the research would be made available for those interested, or, for those with whom I am still in contact, I would provide a debriefing.¹¹³

Informed consent for each inquiry is an ethical requirement. For this study, an informal informed consent was thought to be adequate as parents are responsible adults, able to choose or refuse to participate in a project. Permission was individually sought prior to each interview.

Explaining the project to the respondent is essential so that the participant is aware of the main aim of the research and that his responses will be interpreted. This helps to build a relationship based on confidence and clarity of purpose between the researcher and the respondent, while showing that his contribution is worthwhile and important for the development of the inquiry. It is also important to make clear that the participant can withhold at any time his consent regarding his participation.

“To speak with somebody represents more than questioning; it is an experience, a particular event that one can direct, code, standardize, professionalize, control, think over at will, but that always includes unknown aspects (thus, risky)

¹¹³ In Brittany, I am in contact with the deputy director of *Diwan* and he voiced his interest in being kept informed of the results of my inquiry.

because it is an interactive live event, and not only an extraction of information”¹¹⁴ (*my translation* Blanchet and Gotman, 1992: 21-2).

An interview represents a moment of cooperation between the researcher and the respondent. This kind of concerted attitude contributes to the collection of interesting data and an enjoyable encounter between the two parties.

“The extent to which we involve the people we study in our work, at all stages, has to do with how we conceive of our relationship to them” (B. Johnstone, 2000: 49).

Following Cameron *et al*’s (1992) classification of the types of research ‘on, for and with the researched’, I chose not to involve the participants in the research. Its purpose was not an advocacy for minority language maintenance, so it was not ‘for the researched’ – although my findings will be available to the respondents. Nor was it an empowerment exercise to defend the people studied and involve them. In fact, my inquiry was only ‘on the researched’.

The issue this study examines is extremely sensitive in Brittany and in Scotland. The languages are in a critical position and financial state assistance has recently been awarded. Support is expected, especially as the minority language issue has become a priority on some politicians’ agenda. In such situation, any criticism of the implemented measures may be interpreted as a threat calling for the withdrawal of financial support or even as approval of the disappearance of the minority languages. To question the adequacy of the measures put in place without causing offence is a problem that any researcher is likely to encounter.

Moreover, an evaluation showing their shortcomings or simply their lack of impact can diminish the enthusiasm and goodwill people dedicate to the revitalization or maintenance of minority languages. At its worst, it could antagonize people and even disrupt the atmosphere in the community in creating sides – very far from the intention of this thesis. However, it would be equally wrong not to report shortcomings of language revitalization measures only because they are considered to be politically correct or might offend some people. Research is about reporting as fairly as possible a given situation analysed through the researcher’s framework.

¹¹⁴ “S’entretenir avec quelqu’un, est davantage encore que questionner, une expérience, un événement singulier, que l’on peut maîtriser, coder, standardiser, professionnaliser, gérer, refroidir à souhait, mais qui comporte toujours un certain nombre d’inconnues (et donc de risques) inhérentes au fait d’un processus interlocutoire, et non pas simplement d’un prélèvement d’informations”.

8.6 Conclusion

The information gathered through the semi-structured interview schedules with parents and the small number of teachers interviewed represented the main source of data.

During the encounters, every piece of information and anecdote was taken into account in order to enhance understanding of the individual's frame of mind and offer additional insight to the analysis. All the factors at risk of skewing the findings were evaluated.

A professional ethical conduct adopted by the researcher throughout her inquiry represented the best way to prevent an inappropriate analysis and report of findings; she also had an ethical responsibility because of her intrusion in the respondents' life and their community. At the same time, thoughtful conduct will ensure that the research is approved and respected by the wider research community.

9 FINDINGS

9.1 An overarching introduction to the findings

BACKGROUND: Many indigenous and endangered languages with a declining first language population enjoy an improved status. Most states in the western world encourage their revitalization through the implementation of state intervention programmes, namely schools.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE INQUIRY: The focus is on parents and the reasons for their choice of an education delivered through the medium of the standard variety of a minority language. It explores many factors informing the decisions of the parents including their socioeconomic profile, their language background and their patterns of language use.

It is hoped that the exploration of the parental aspect will go some way to explain why the school revitalization effort has not yet permeated to the wider society.

This inquiry focused on two locations and on two minority languages, Breton in Brittany and Gaelic in the Western Isles.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: Both sets of findings are presented separately as the framework had not been designed as a comparative framework. However, over the course of the analysis, strong common themes emerged, albeit that they applied to different stages of what could be called a timeline of intergenerational transmission applicable to minority languages going through the process of language shift.

NOTE: Percentages are often used in the reporting of the findings in order either to help make comparisons or to make an estimate of proportion. However, great care must be taken when they are used, as overall numbers are low. This is valid for the findings as regard to each table and figure in both locations.

Tables or graphs: number of respondents, reporting on themselves and other relatives and subdivisions of households in several groups

Base number and description of groups on which tables are reporting	Brittany	Western Isles
Respondents or couple-respondents who were interviewed: PARENTAL HOUSEHOLDS	29*	22*
Numbers involved where respondents who were interviewed provided information on themselves and their spouses/partners: PARENTS	58	44
Numbers involved where respondents who were interviewed provided information on their and their spouses' parents, i.e. the children's GRANDPARENTS	116	88
Numbers involved where respondents who were interviewed provided information on their children	29	22

(*When only one parent in the household was available to be interviewed, the responding parent provided details on the spouse from that household for occupation and educational levels, language skills and language acquisition).

- Subdivisions of the 58 Breton parents:**

Breton parents by mother tongue of household in which they grew up	Number
Number of parents reported to have grown up in a household with no native Breton speakers	33
Number of parents reported to have grown up in a household with one native Breton speaker	8
Number of parents reported to have grown up in a household with both parents native Breton speakers	17
TOTAL	58

- Subdivisions of the 44 Scottish parents:**

Scottish parents by mother tongue of household in which they grew up	Number
Number of parents reported to have grown up in a household with no native Gaelic speakers	13
Number of parents reported to have grown up in a household with one native Gaelic speaker	8
Number of parents reported to have grown up in a household with both parents native Gaelic speakers	23
TOTAL	44

Scottish fathers: 22

Scottish fathers by mother tongue of household in which they grew up	Number
Number of fathers reported to have grown up in a household with no native Gaelic speakers	6
Number of fathers reported to have grown up in a household with one native Gaelic speaker	3
Number of fathers reported to have grown up in a household with both parents native Gaelic speakers	13
TOTAL	22

Scottish mothers: 22

Scottish mothers by mother tongue of household in which they grew up	Number
Number of mothers reported to have grown up in a household with no native Gaelic speakers	7
Number of mothers reported to have grown up in a household with one native Gaelic speaker	3
Number of mothers reported to have grown up in a household with both parents native Gaelic speakers	10
TOTAL	22

Tables and figures

The number of households and responses (in the case of open-ended questions) is stipulated each time after the title.

In the case of open-ended questions, each response is considered as a parental household decision. Each responding or parental household could make a number of responses.

Therefore, tables or figures are reporting on the unprompted number of responses provided by the interviewees to the open-ended questions.

Many figures and tables show the range of categories identified by the parental households together with the number of responses for each individual category.

BRITTANY

9.2 Respondents' socioeconomic profile

To understand the background to the choices made by the parents who contributed the data on which this thesis is based, it is important to start with an overview description of how these parents are defined and how they define themselves. This section begins with an exploration of socioeconomic status.

9.2.1 Level of education

The parents had a good level of qualification (Table 12). All the parents had a qualification of some sort. Nearly two thirds of the parents (62%) had either Further Education qualifications or at least the first part of a university-level degree.¹¹⁵

Table 12: Level of Education of parents of children receiving Breton-medium education (N of parents:58)

Level of Education	N	%
University degree levels	22	38
Further Education qualifications	14	24
Baccalauréat ¹¹⁶	12	21
Apprenticeship	10	17
No Qualifications	0	0
Total	58	100

Proportionally, the level of education of the parents was not representative of the population of Brittany (the scale is in reverse order). They were more highly qualified than the population as a whole. (See Figure 18.)

¹¹⁵ DEUG, equivalent to the Higher Ordinary (level 2) in Scotland.

¹¹⁶ Qualification corresponding to Scottish Higher Certificate or equivalent.

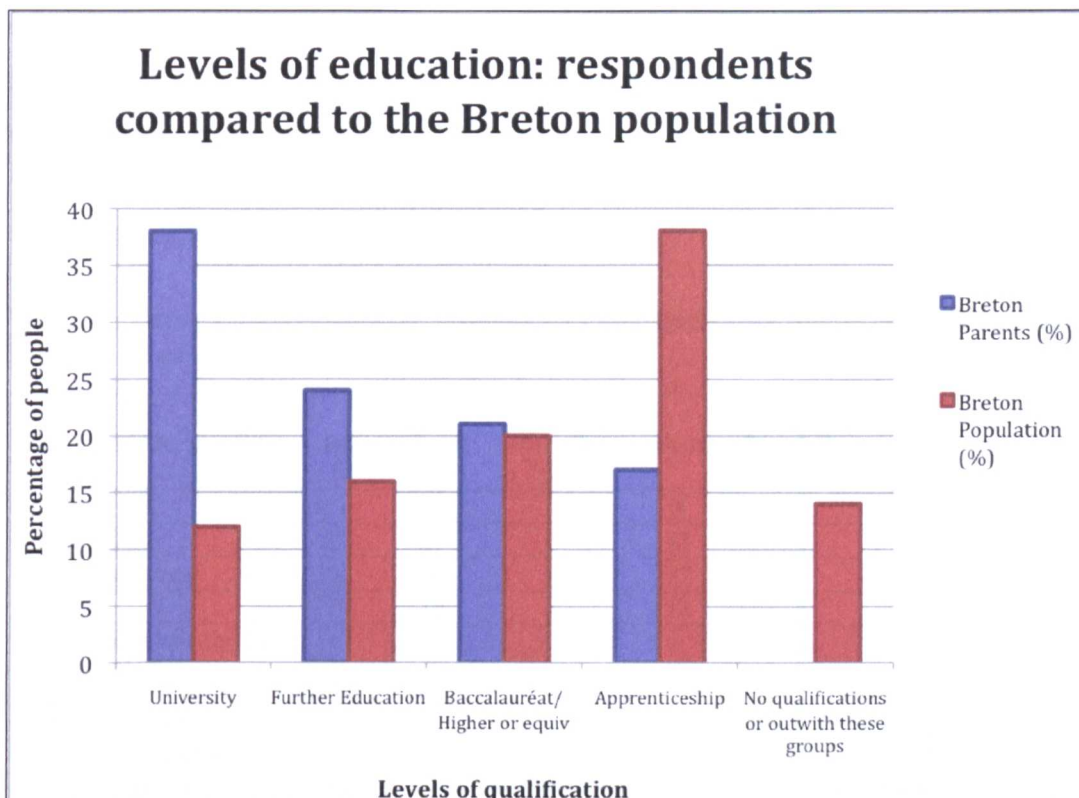


Figure 18: Levels of education in percentage: respondents compared to the Breton population (N of parents:58)

Data for the level of qualification of the Breton population were introduced in the methodology chapter, along with the rearranged scale from the INSEE (2008) document and its translation. Detailed data was only available for Brittany as a whole region.

9.2.2 Occupational categories

Over half of the parents had professional or intermediate occupations,¹¹⁷ with 15 (55%) of the parents from these two categories being either teachers or social workers (see Table 13).

The next categories, with an equal number of parents, (10 or 17%) were business owners (usually small companies apart from one business director) and skilled workers. There were also a few farmers (four), which for half of them had an unusual educational background as they had a university degree (see Figure 19).

Comparison with the official statistics from the surrounding area of the surveyed schools underlined that parents had a higher social status. More parents belonged to the professional

¹¹⁷ The present classification follows the INSEE occupational classification system, which considers that teachers along with other nursing professions and social workers belong to the intermediate category – see Appendix B: Understanding the occupational scale.

and intermediate professions: 56% compared to 31% for South Finistère¹¹⁸. There were also more farmers, but fewer skilled and especially unskilled workers. Another point was the lack of unemployed parents, although 9.5% of the whole population of South Finistère is out of work. (See Table 13 below for specific numbers and percentages or Figure 19 for a graphic representation.)

Table 13: Occupational categories: respondents compared to the Breton population of South Finistère (N of parents:58)

Classified Occupations	Respondents N	Respondents %	Population in South Finistère %
Professional	5	9	9
Intermediate	27	47	22
Business owner	10	17	8
Skilled	10	17	29
Unskilled (semi-routine & routine)	2	3	28
Farmer	4	7	4
Total	58	100	100

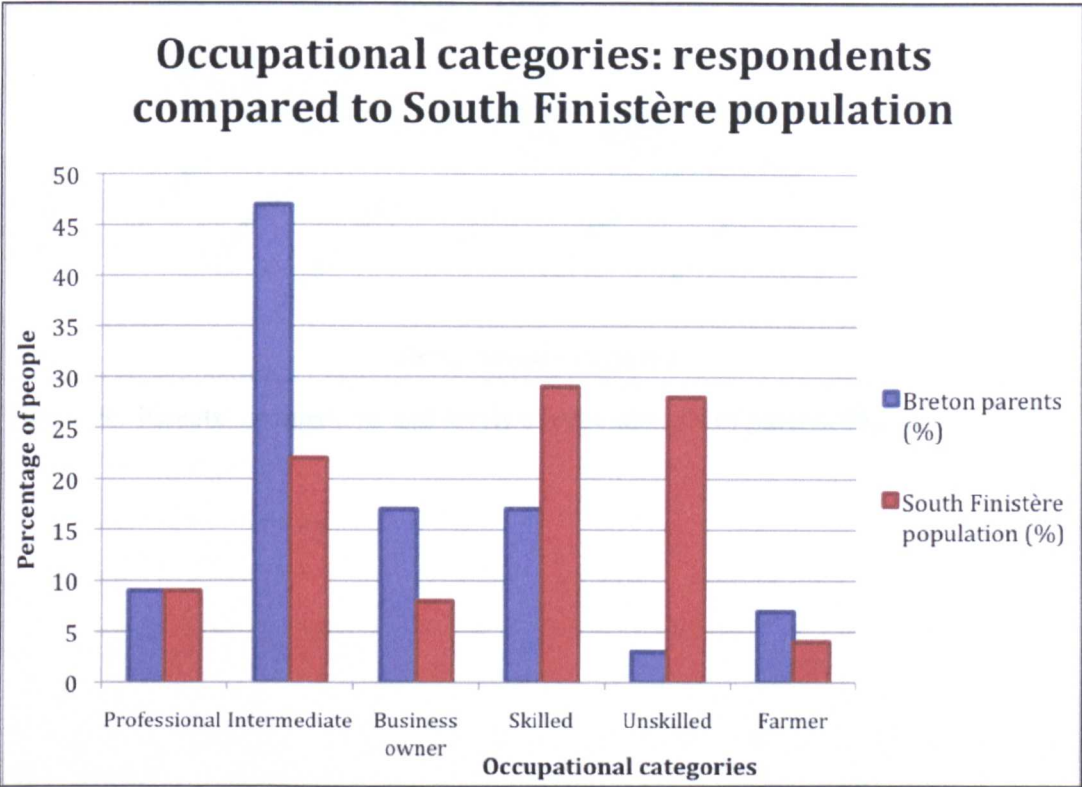


Figure 19: Occupational categories in percentage: parents compared to the population living in South Finistère (percentages)

¹¹⁸ Figures for Brittany were introduced in the methodology chapter. For the rearranged scale from the INSEE (2008) document and its translation (see Appendix C).

Overall, as the figure below shows the parents were highly qualified and the majority also belonged to the intermediate occupational category (47%).¹¹⁹

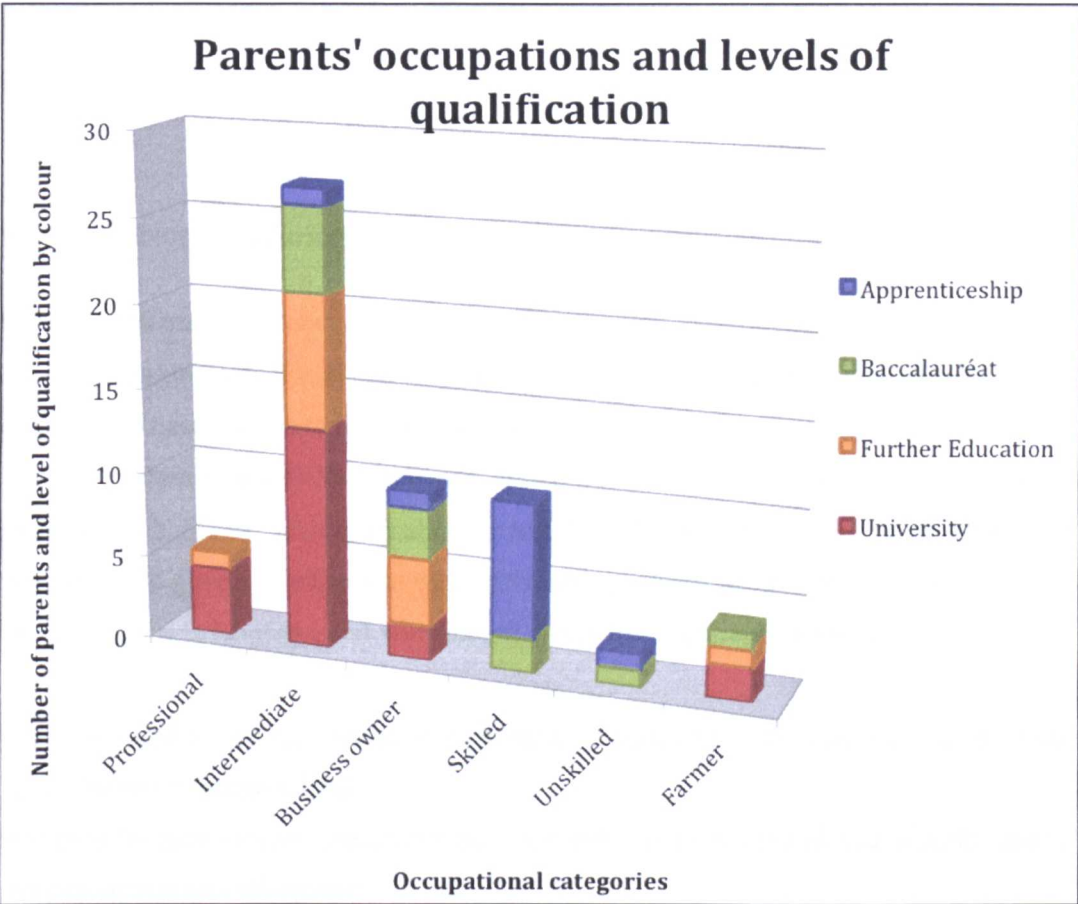


Figure 20: Parents’ occupations and levels of education (N of parents:58)

¹¹⁹ These findings should be approached with care as the surveyed number of parents and schools is too low to draw hard conclusions –it might may be due to the locations of the schools picked for the fieldwork; these findings nonetheless provide an interesting basis for further research.

9.3 Choice of a Breton-medium education

The above socioeconomic factors or descriptions provide a platform from which to consider other factors associated with choice of minority language education, namely reasons linked to linguistic heritage, cultural and/or educational aspirations. (This latter point was believed to have played a secondary role in parental choice, because all schools must adhere to strict curricular and educational guidelines.)

9.3.1 Factors of choice

9.3.1.1 Important factors

All of the respondents found that the concept of bilingualism played a crucial role in their choice of a Breton-medium school (see Table 14).

26 parental households (90%) were also attracted by the way bilingualism was implemented within the school through an immersive method, facilitating the acquisition process of the children. This general feeling was well expressed by one of the parents who said: “At that age, it [a language and knowledge] enters like a knife through butter”.

Over two thirds of the responding households (17) highly rated the teaching approach selected by the Breton-medium school.

Similarly the parents also considered the low number of pupils per class and within the school as a whole as a real advantage.

Breton culture was the factor given least importance by the parents. For instance, less than half of the responding families (13) regarded it very important and nearly a third (9) ranked it as only moderately important.

Table 14: Important factors for choosing a Breton-medium education (N of parental households: 29)

Factors for choosing Breton-medium education	Order of importance					N
	Very Important	Important	Moderately important	Of little importance	Unimportant	
Bilingualism	29	0	0	0	0	29
Immersion	26	2	1	0	0	29
Smaller classes	17	5	6	0	1	29
Teaching methods	17	3	5	1	3	29
Breton culture	13	7	9	0	0	29

9.3.1.2 Qualitative exploration of parental data on choice

The above pattern of responses concerning relative importance of a range of factors was reinforced when this was explored in a more open-ended way. Again, three main categories of responses emerged, namely:

- Specifically educational benefits associated with outcomes for the children.
- Other advantages associated with the Breton-medium school experience such as conditions typically found in the classrooms and the ethos in which the teaching took place.
- Cultural and heritage outcomes, including linguistic attainment.

Educational outcomes

Early bilingualism and small class and/or school size were the two reasons most frequently mentioned by the parents.

Regarding bilingualism, over three-quarters of the parental households (24) praised the intellectual benefits such an education could bring to their children. (See Figure 21.) The feeling commonly expressed was that the intellectual stimulation develops the children's abilities and prepares the ground for more knowledge. Some examples of what the parents typically said are given below:

"At that age, they are like sponges, they absorb anything".

"It's good for the brain".

"It facilitates the development of skills for Higher Education later on".

Some parents throughout the interview referred to other countries where teaching took place by immersion such as Canada, Wales and the Basque country, or scientific reading and conferences. According to them, these showed a positive link between learning another language at a young age and an increase in brain capacity (plasticity) in the children, enhancing mathematical abilities ("it's been proven"). Moreover, a third language could be learnt more easily at a later stage ("a third, a fourth, a fifth...well, plenty languages").

Just under half (14) of the households also highlighted the better educational outcomes for their children, without specifically referring to bilingualism.

A similar proportion of households (12) also focused on the teaching methods associated with immersion used in their choice of school. In addition, they highlighted their preference for the all-inclusive approach to the learning taking place, and the confidence gained by the children through their experience of it.

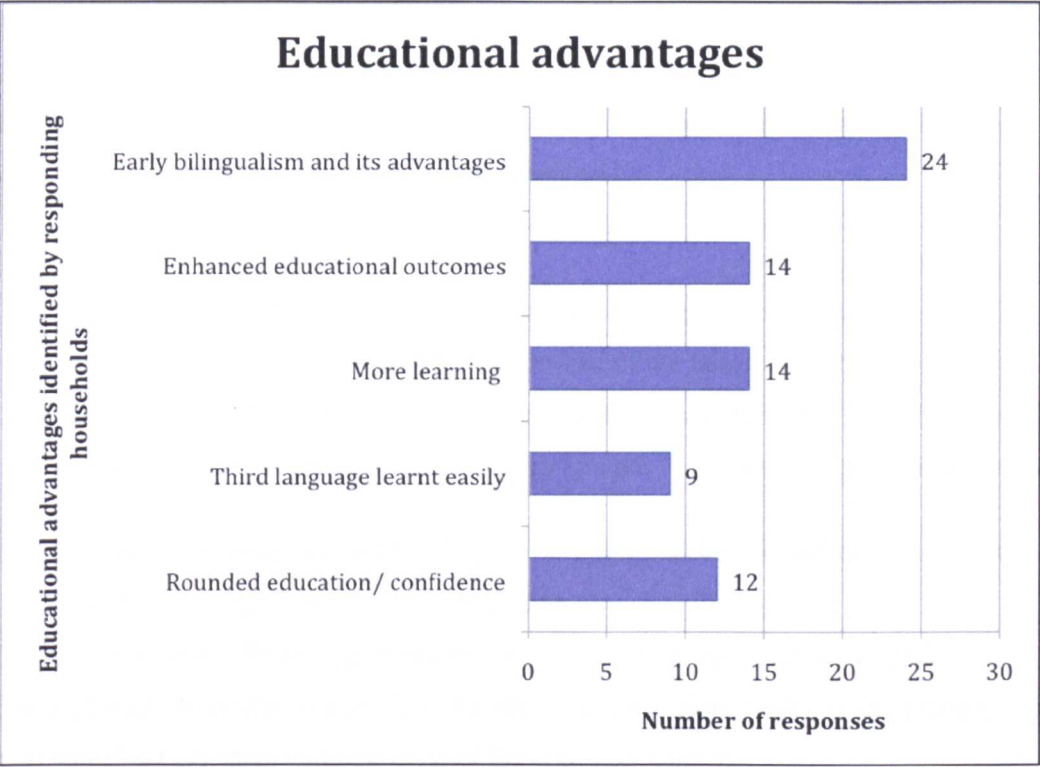


Figure 21: Educational advantages of Breton-medium schools (N of parental households:29; N of responses:73)

Classroom conditions and school ethos

Other advantages were provided by the Breton-medium schools in terms of classroom facilities and the ethos of the school. For instance, over three-quarters of the parental households were keen on small classes. (See Figure 22.) Some of the parents were very clear about this, as the following quotations show:

“When I saw they were 31 in the mainstream nursery school, I didn’t fancy that for X”.

“I didn’t want my child in a cattle market”.

Indeed, some of the parental households, over a third (11), recounted that they chose the Breton-medium school following close investigation of the mainstream sector. A small

number (five) had even enrolled their child in a mainstream school to start with, but had had a disappointing experience. Others had looked at different alternatives and participated in numerous school open-days (“*on a fait le tour des maternelles aux portes ouvertes*”).

Over two thirds (20) of the parental households valued what the associative status¹²⁰ of the school provided. Their relationship with the school and its small size ensured that they knew the teachers well, felt involved in the running of the school, thereby replicating a family atmosphere. This feeling of belonging to a wider family unit came across strongly during the interviews. The parents were looking for a personalized education, a quality in the relationship with the teachers and as one parent said:

“It gave something different; it’s not a factory setting”.

These parents appeared to be very well-informed about educational practices and development. Just over half of them (14) approved of the tailored teaching strategies implemented by teachers they perceived as motivated. They liked the “*projet pédagogique*” of *Diwan*. Many parents referred to the pedagogy Freinet¹²¹ and psychology-based theories.

In short, there was no doubt that the decision to choose a Breton-medium school was a highly-informed one. As one of the mothers confided:

“For the education of one’s children, one is careful about which school to pick”.

Through their discourse, it was clear that they had taken time to choose the primary school that would satisfy them and tick most of the boxes on their list.

¹²⁰ Non-profitmaking organization, conforming to a law passed in 1901. Parents help raising funds by diverse means (day events, concerts, etc.) to safeguard the future of the *Diwan* organization, thereby reinforcing the existing bond between parents: “we live with *Diwan*”.

¹²¹ Freinet pedagogy offers an alternative approach to traditional methods of teaching. The learning is inquiry-based and organized along group work. The children’s interests and real experiences are starting points for the learning process and they are also taught to take responsibility for their own work.

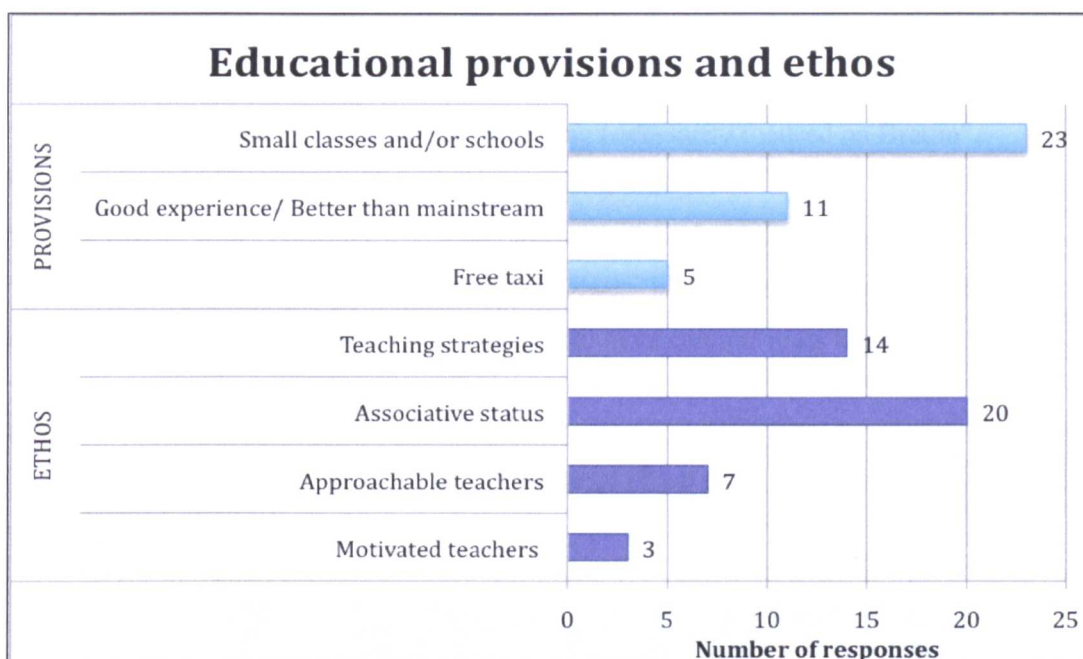


Figure 22: Educational provisions and ethos of Breton-medium schools (N of parental households:29; N of responses:83)

Cultural, heritage and linguistic outcomes

This was the weakest set of responses that emerged from the interviews with parents about their choices. Even so, the possibility offered by the *Diwan* school to strengthen cultural roots was mentioned by over two fifths of the parental households (13) in the hope of opening up their children's curiosity to cultural differences. (See Figure 23.)

Links to Breton *per se* as a basis for their choice did not come across as a priority for many parents. Just over one in five households did mention that Breton as an additional dimension played a part in their choice of school, but they were in a minority. Indeed, this small group did complain about the lack of commitment towards the Breton language showed by other parents.

The majority view reflected indifference to the language *per se* (despite their well-considered school choices) and were very open about this. During the interview, over one in five responding parents (six) were explicit about this and stated plainly that if Breton were to become an obstacle to their children's learning, they would not hesitate to take them to another school. The following comments reflect this position:

"It's not for Breton; if she had been able to follow another language [in another school], it would have been the same".

“Like other pupils learn to play the violin or football, it’s as good to learn another language; it’s better to learn more”.

“For me, it’s only for bilingualism without being necessarily focused on Breton”.

“It’s not for Breton in particular, but for the skill it brings”.

“I hope Breton won’t come back as a big language, I don’t want to have to learn it”.

“In the L. – private school,¹²² it’s Chinese, at *Diwan*, it’s Breton, but I couldn’t care less about the future of Breton; what’s important is to have cultural roots to go far”.

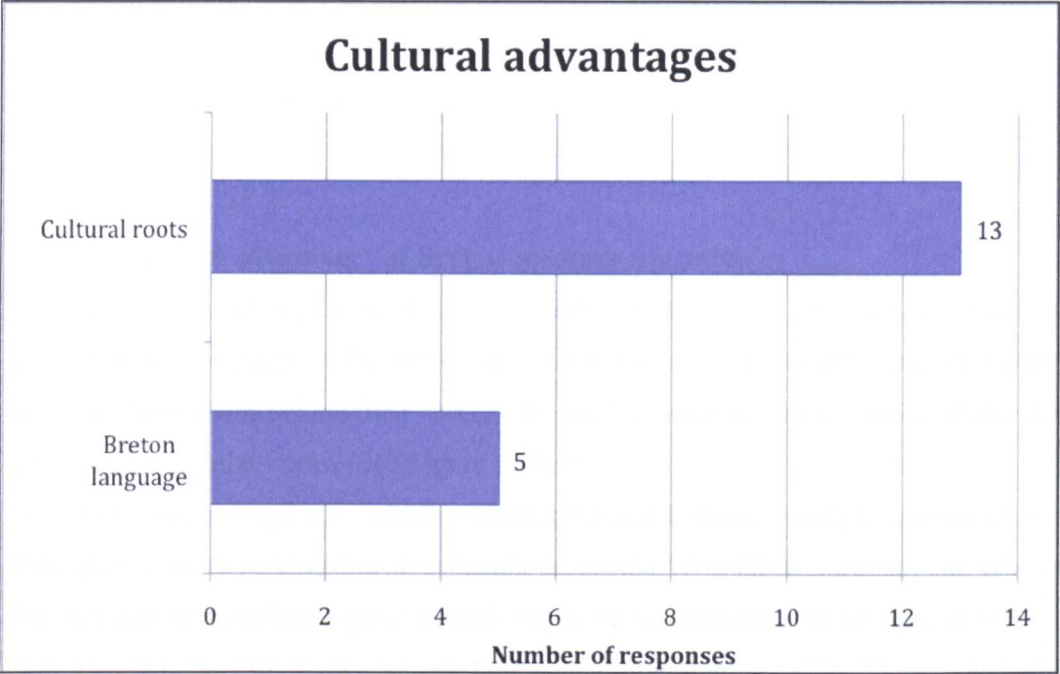


Figure 23: Cultural advantages of Breton-medium schools (N of parental households:29; N of responses:18)

In summary, the recurrent and prominent themes, which clearly emerged from the analysis of reasons for choosing Breton-medium education were:

- The small class sizes, which set the *Diwan* schools apart from the other schools and offered a better teacher-pupil ratio for a more tailored education.
- Early bilingualism for their children.
- The potential for making or enhancing cultural roots.

¹²² The parent named the private school in the area that provided the best results to qualify for post-secondary elitist schools (*Grandes Ecoles*).

9.3.2 Advantages of Breton-medium education

In the interview, parents were asked to consider where they had experienced or expected to experience advantages associated with Breton-medium education. The question was different from why they had made their choice, but the responses, which emerged were remarkably similar.

Parents were aware of the advantages of Breton-medium education, especially in its educational aspects. 27 (93%) parental households believed that such an education would improve the intellectual abilities of their offsprings and they all thought that Breton would help their children to learn other languages.

9.3.2.1 Perceived advantages of Breton-medium education

The chart below displays the parental households' answers to the open-ended question about the perceived advantages of the Breton-medium school. As parents indicated when they described the reasons behind their choice of school (presented earlier), they also saw the main advantages in similar terms. (See Figure 24 below.)

All but two responding households mentioned the educational advantages associated with the addition of another language, with a smaller proportion (two thirds) stressing the subsequent ease of learning more languages (18) and the increased intellectual development (18).

Nearly all families (26) highly regarded the operational running of the school, which allowed them to be involved. In this context, the parents mentioned how this close contact helped to reproduce this family atmosphere they kept referring to; it created ties or reinforced previous ones. Almost all parents (27) knew other parents before choosing a Breton-medium education. As for perceiving advantages specifically relating to the Breton language *per se*, it was mentioned by less than a quarter (seven) of the households – a similar low score (see Figure 23 above).

So, in their discourse most of the parents seemed to be more interested in the educational advantages of a bilingual education and its potential benefits than in the language itself.

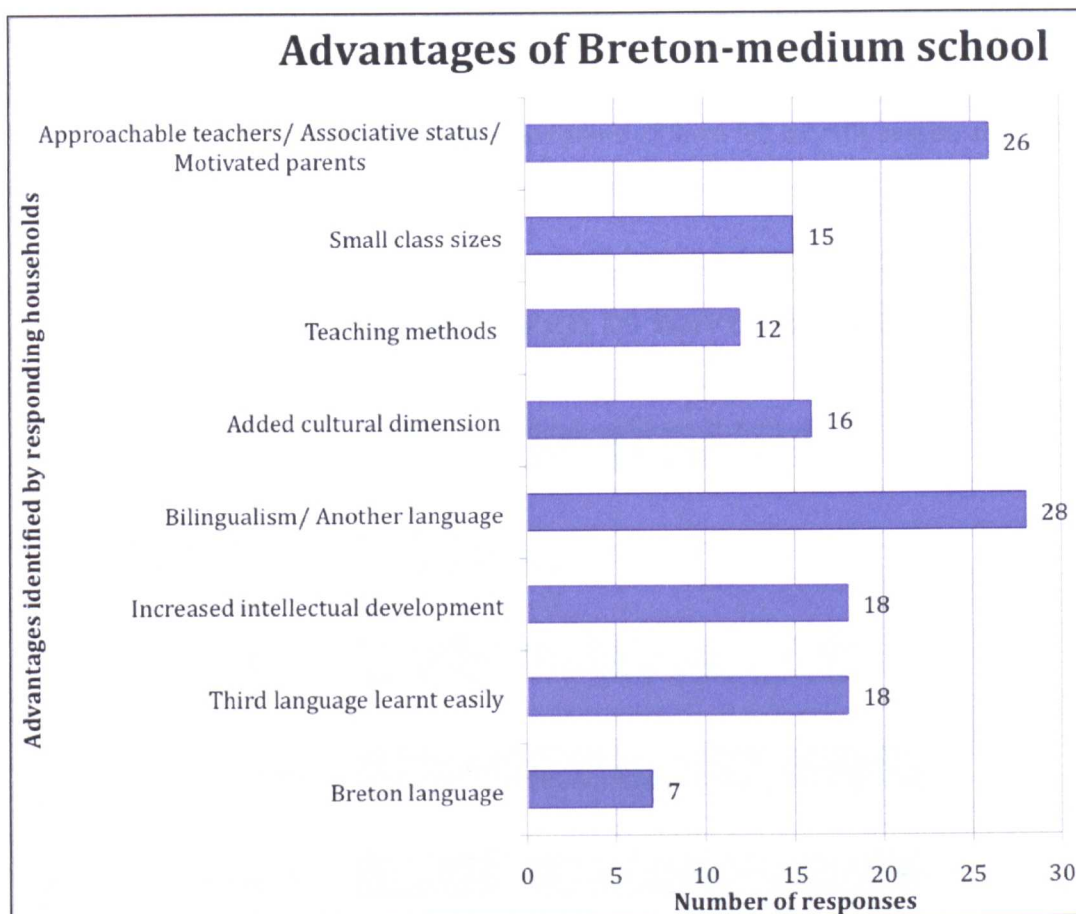


Figure 24: Advantages of Breton-medium school (N of parental households:29; N of responses:140)

9.3.2.2 What about Breton? Importance of Breton in choice of school

When queried directly and specifically about Breton, all the responding households considered it was important for their children to speak Breton and almost half of them (13) thought it was very important. (See Table 13.)

So, while it was not the most commonly mentioned advantage recognized by the parents, this did not mean that it was not important to them.

Table 15: Children with Breton (N of parental households:29)

Children with Breton	N	%
Very important	13	45
Important	16	55
Not Important	0	0
Total	29	100

Exploratory prompting questions once more elicited the link to what bilingualism (17 households) could provide and their appreciation of a fulfilling education (17) (see figure

below). Just over half of the households (15) also added that Breton was part of a heritage, not necessarily their own, but from the area: it was “*la langue des ancêtres*”. Just under half (14) specifically linked Breton to transmission and some of them felt morally responsible to keep the language going through their children.

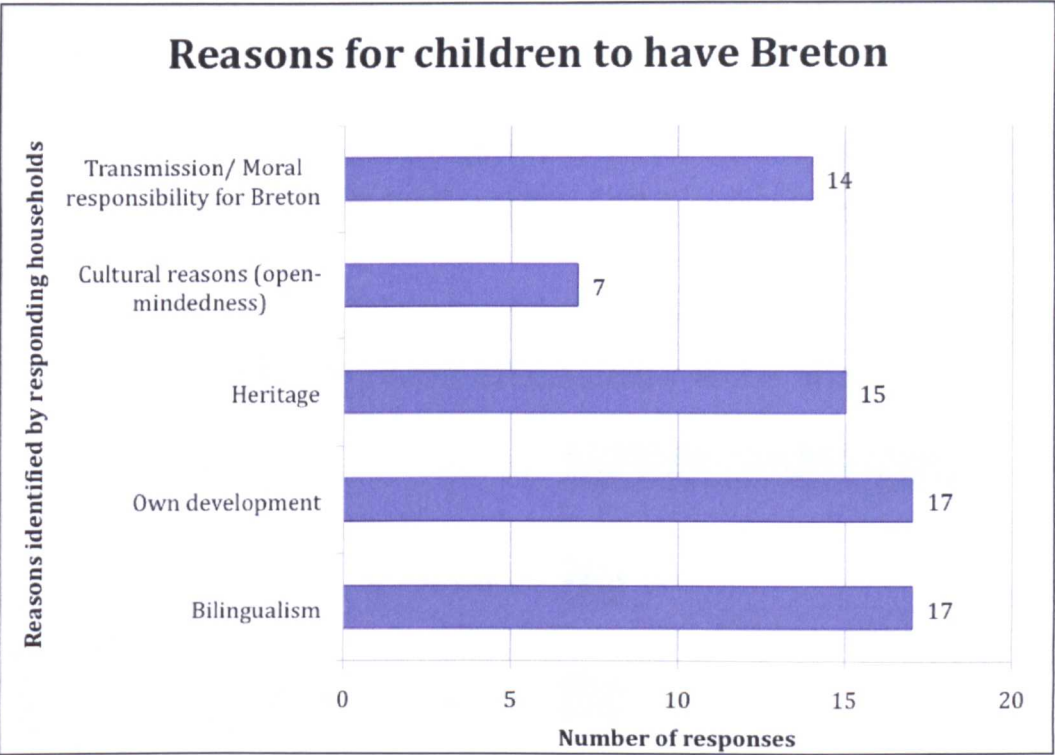


Figure 25: Reasons for children to have Breton (N of parental households:29; N of responses:70)

This section showed that for parents, the education of their children represented one of their priorities: they wanted to choose the right school offering the best educational potential intellectually and culturally. They opted for the Breton-medium school for its bilingual provision, its reduced class-sizes and its cultural sensitivity. They also valued the family atmosphere of the schools.

Their choice of school might also relate to wider issues linked to their beliefs and attitudes towards the Breton language. These will be analysed in the follow-up section.

9.4 Parents’ perceptions about Breton use and future

9.4.1 Breton use and its future

9.4.1.1 Situations with Breton

For the responding households, the two most common situations where Breton was likely to be used were the school (76% or 22) and the elderly Breton speakers (65% or 19) (see Figure 26). The Breton-medium school like the rallies were also occasions where Breton could be heard. It is significant to note that the parents themselves associated the use of Breton either with the school, media or with elderly people and not as a common and everyday language of communication.

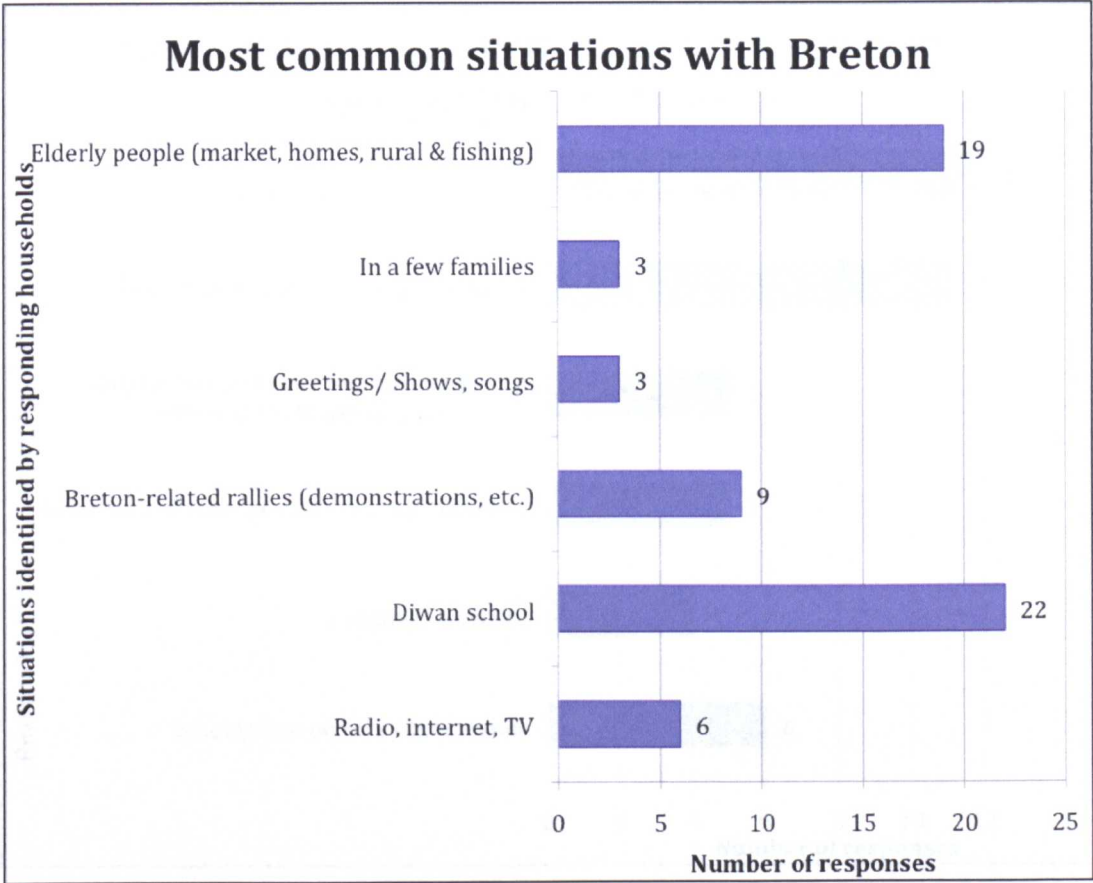


Figure 26: Most common situations with Breton (N of parental households:29; N of responses:62)

Speaking Breton

Once more, the responding households drew on the school and the old people as being the groups most likely to speak Breton, although they specified different reasons (see figure below). They intimated that the traditional or native speakers used their local Breton as an everyday language without any other reasons than to communicate, whereas the other situations they cited presented either a compulsive element (school and immersion) or political convictions requiring the use of Breton, usually the standard variety. A few parents also added that opportunities to use Breton were becoming “rare...especially with the old generation dying”.

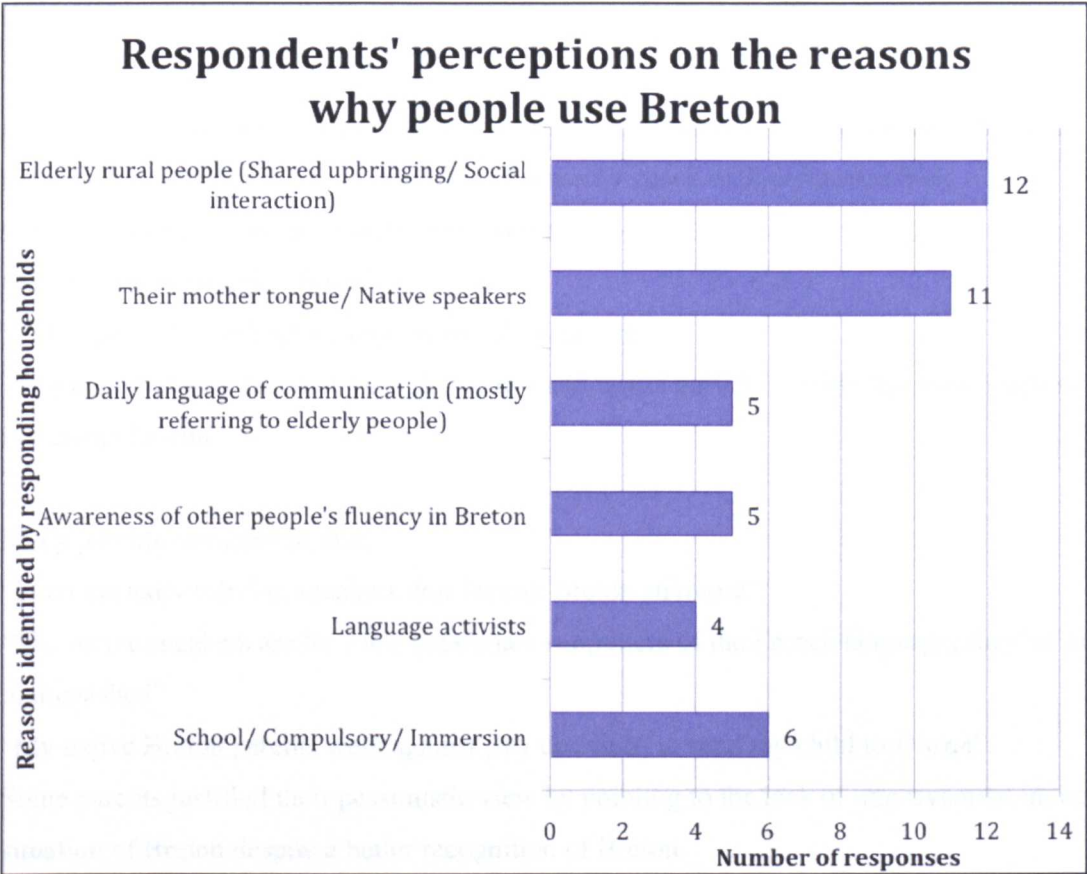


Figure 27: Respondents’ perceptions on the reasons why people use Breton (N of parental households:29; N of responses:43)

9.4.1.2 Future of Breton

The majority of parental households believed Breton would stop being used as a language of communication; over a third (11) expected it to become extinct, while a quarter (seven) of households thought Breton would remain only a cultural language (Table 16).

Just over a quarter of households (eight) believed that Breton was reviving and gaining speakers.

Table 16: Households' beliefs about the future of Breton (N of parental households:29)

Future of Breton	N	%
Reviving as a language of communication	8	28
Reviving as a cultural language only	7	24
Becoming extinct	11	38
Undecided	3	10
Total	29	100

During the interview, many parents hoped Breton could survive as a vernacular. However, they always completed their sentences with a reality check with comments like:

“But realistically, there are not enough learners”.

“There are not enough schools”.

“But reasonably, without a shock wave, it’s over”, etc.

They thought there were not enough learners and it was mostly activists that were interested in “saving Breton”.

Many parents commented that:

“Even the native Breton speakers don’t speak Breton anymore”.

“The native speakers are the most passionate supporters of the French language; they’ve been brainwashed”.

“My native Breton parents were against [my decision] to send my child to *Diwan*”.

Some parents justified their pessimistic view by pointing to the lack of improvement in the situation of Breton despite a better recognition of Breton.

At the same time, 26 (90%) responding households believed that Breton-medium schools kept Breton alive and over half (16) also assumed that learners would have a positive impact on Breton.

They had diverging opinions – not exclusive of one another – regarding the way and form Breton might evolve into. (See Figure 28.)

Around a third of households (10) believed that legalization would improve the situation of Breton, although some families (five) realized that success was dependent on the commitment of people to learn Breton or on the generation of the Breton-medium school children. Still, these parents thought the situation of Breton could be improved.

Over half of the households (16) predicted a future for the literary form of Breton, which some called the “standardized form with no local variation” or the “artificial language”. Some considered that Breton would survive only as a cultural or heritage language for songs, but not as an everyday language of communication.

Under half of households (12) expected Breton to be used mostly by activists or in institutions like schools and as such it would remain a minority language with few speakers.

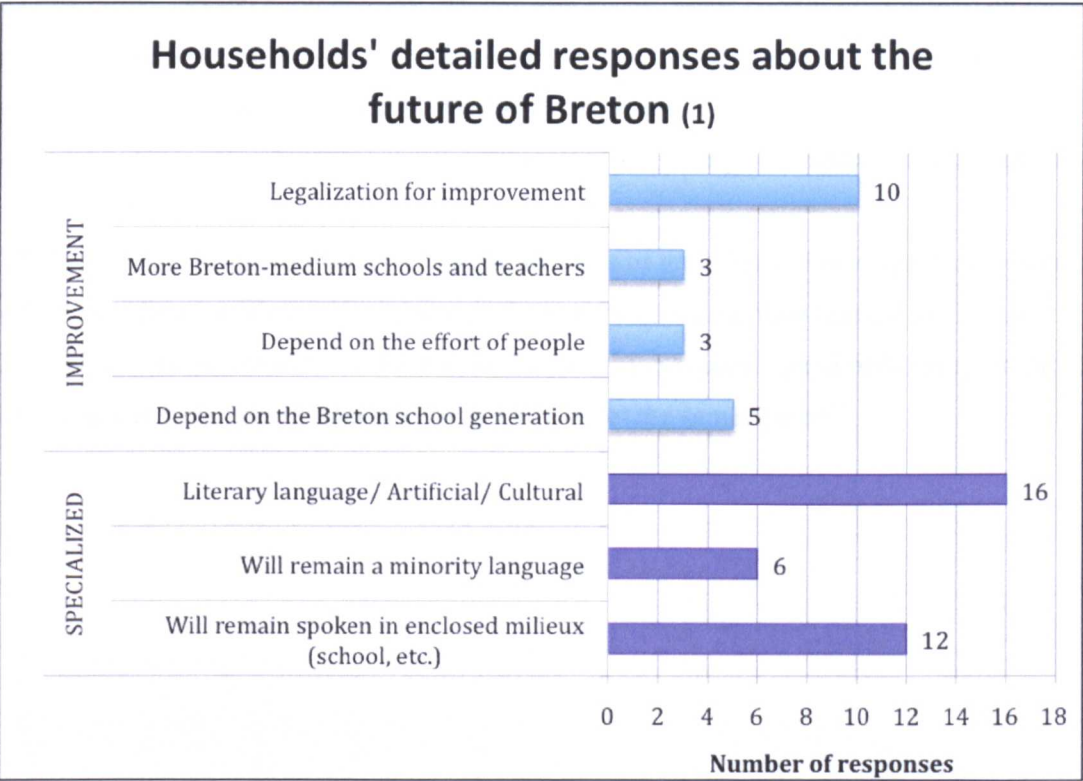


Figure 28: Households’ detailed responses about the future of Breton (N of parental households:29; N of responses:55)

(1) The responses concerning the survival of Breton have been excluded as they have been presented in the previous table.

9.4.2 Image of Breton and growing interest

9.4.2.1 Image of Breton

Almost all the responding households (28) thought the image of Breton had changed. They noticed how Breton culture or what is usually associated with these terms had evolved from being looked down upon to becoming if not trendy, much more acceptable, even mainstream.

The overwhelming majority of families (20) remarked that Breton was now associated with a strong cultural image, half (15) noted that it was promoted by the media and had been recognized to some extent, bilingual road signs often being given as examples (see Figure 29). The same proportion (15) felt that all of this contributed to an increased interest in Breton and its associated cultural activities like dancing and music. Some parents commented on the commercialization of Breton, explaining how it had acquired a certain “charm” for instance on letterheads or how it was used: “the little word in Breton at the top of a brochure or before a speech”. They also added that it was getting used as “a badge of identity” to attract tourists.

13 (45%) households referred to the standardization of the language as a significant change, which introduced a “Frenchified Breton”. Several parents described that the differences between *néo-breton* and the traditional Breton language spoken by old people caused problem of intergenerational comprehension because “it’s not the same Breton”.

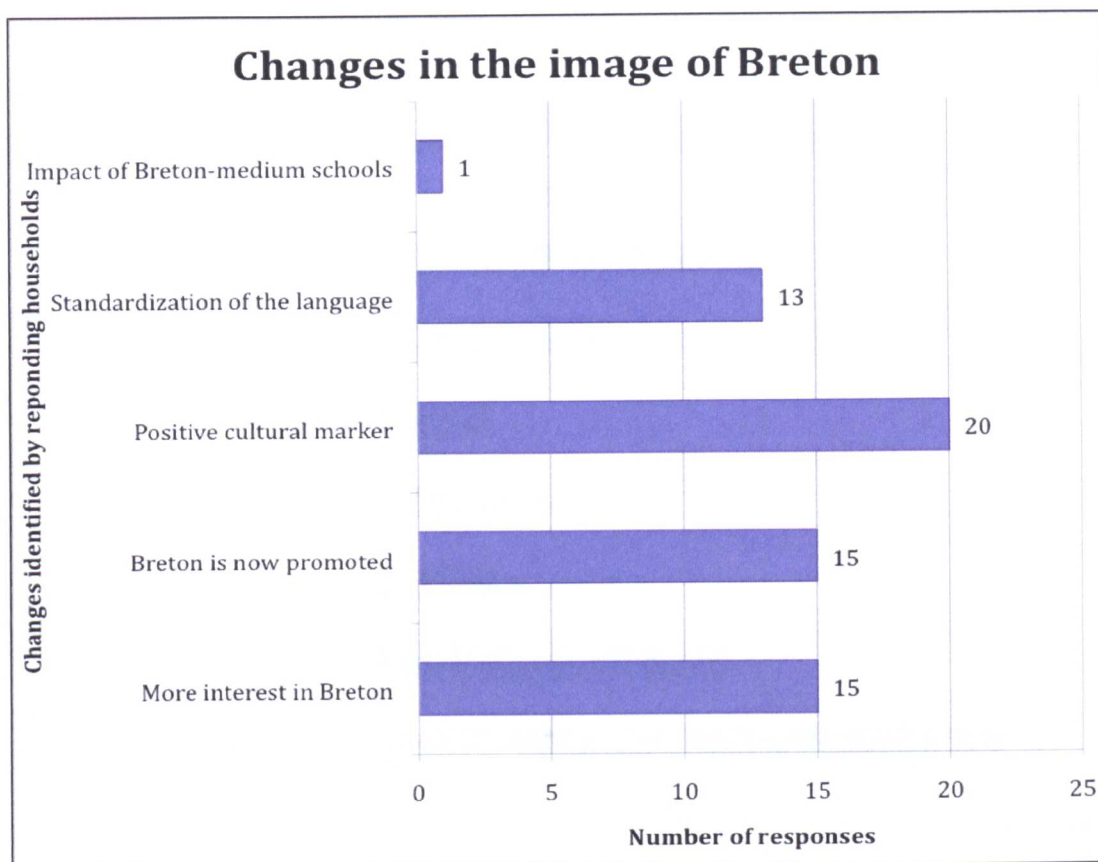


Figure 29: Changes in the image of Breton (N of parental households:29; N of responses:64)

9.4.2.2 Interest in Breton

Origin of interest

Every household acknowledged a change in its attitude towards the Breton language.

Parents developed an interest in Breton for diverse reasons, none of which were exclusive of the other. (See Figure 30.)

More than half mentioned their background (16) and nearly a third a sense of heritage (nine).

Educational issues also played an important part in the development of their interest in Breton. Nearly two thirds of the responding households linked the start of their interest in Breton either to the Breton-medium school (10) or to their children's education (eight).

Therefore, for these respondents, their children seemed to have acted as a trigger for their awareness of the Breton language, especially at the time of choosing a primary school. Many comments were similar to the following ones:

"I have been discovering the Breton culture since my children went to school".

"Before I had no knowledge of it".

"It is through the school".

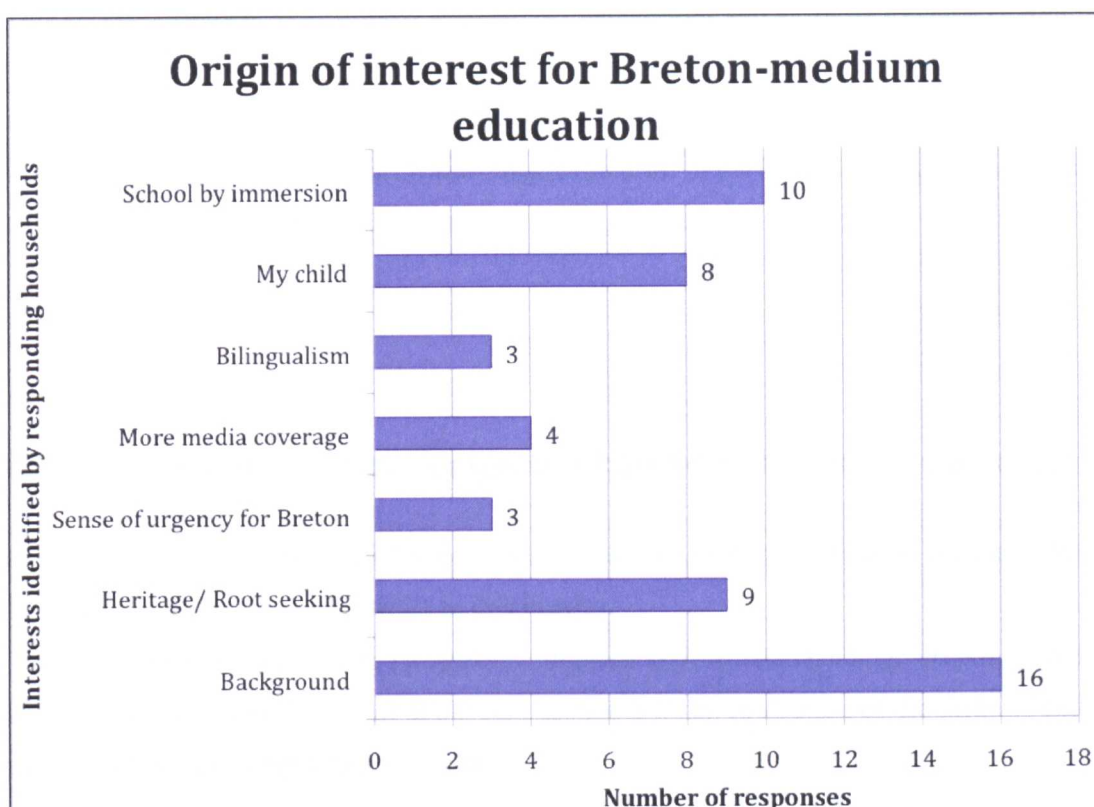


Figure 30: Origin of interest for Breton (N of parental households:29; N of responses:53)

Support for Breton

Over a third of the responding families (11) regarded themselves as quite supportive of the Breton language; some reported they participated in demonstrations and six households believed that sending their children to a Breton-medium school was already a proof of their commitment (Table 17).

Only a few households felt that they were very supportive: they had been involved for a long time in several organizations for the safeguard of Breton and they also helped the Breton-medium school by raising funds, by organizing meetings and demonstrating.

Over half (15) considered they were not very supportive.

Table 17: Support for the Breton language (N of parental households:29)

Level of support to Breton	N	%
Very supportive	3	10
Quite supportive	11	38
Not very supportive	15	52
Total	29	100

This section examined the parental households’ perceptions and attitudes towards Breton, how they changed over time, how their interest in the language had been aroused and especially in the cultural movement associated with it.

The following section will assess if this surge of interest in the Breton language is evidenced through the parents’ fluency in the language.

9.5 Parents and Breton language: competence and background

Bearing in mind their choice of Breton-medium schooling for their children, parents’ fluency in the Breton language is of interest to this inquiry.

This topic dealing with the four recognized language skills (understanding, speaking, reading and writing) is analysed in detail in the next section with an evaluation of the skills of both parents within each responding household.

9.5.1 Language competence by skills

9.5.1.1 Level of skills: understanding and speaking

The general low level of Breton language skills is reflected in what the parents reported as regards their language skills (Tables 18 and 19). Three quarters of parents could not understand Breton communication or speak, beyond the level of ‘Restricted messages’. The proportion of fathers operating at a level ‘Reasonably well’ and above is higher compared with the proportion of mothers: nearly a third (12) compared to not even one in seven (three).

Table 18: Parents’ understanding skills (N of parents:58)

Levels of Understanding	Ability to understand of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Breton	2	3	5
Few words and sentences	12	12	24
Restricted messages	3	11	14
Reasonably well	3	2	5
Nearly everything	9	1	10
Total	29	29	58

The bold dividing line in the middle of this table and the following tables separates the non-fluent (above) from the fluent Breton speakers (below).

Table 19: Parents' speaking skills (N of parents:58)

Levels of Speaking	Ability to speak of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Breton	5	4	9
Few words and sentences	9	15	24
Restricted messages	3	8	11
Reasonably well	8	1	9
Nearly everything	4	1	5
Total	29	29	58

9.5.1.2 Level of skills: reading and writing

The tables representing the level of reading and writing skills show a similar distribution of the two written skills; 47 (81%) parents reported that they could at best read 'Few words and sentences' and concerning the writing skills, 53 (91%) parents said that at best they could write 'Restricted messages' in Breton with the great majority of them (45) being able to write at best only 'Few words and sentences'.

The tables also illustrate that only eight fathers could read at least to a fairly high standard and that two of them had developed a full competence in writing skills.

Table 20: Parents' reading skills (N of parents:58)

Levels of Reading	Ability to read of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Breton	16	11	27
Few words and sentences	4	16	20
Restricted messages	1	2	3
Reasonably well	5	0	5
Nearly everything	3	0	3
Total	29	29	58

Table 21: Parents' writing skills (N of parents:58)

Levels of Writing	Ability to write of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Breton	18	13	31
Few words and sentences	4	10	14
Restricted messages	2	6	8
Reasonably well	3	0	3
Nearly everything	2	0	2
Total	29	29	58

9.5.1.3 Summarizing points:

Three quarters of the parents had a basic level of understanding and speaking in Breton. Over eight out of 10 parents had a basic level of reading and writing in Breton.

9.5.2 The language background of the parents of the children

The previous section presented the limited fluency parents believed they had in Breton. In order to understand some of the factors having produced this general low level of competence, it is relevant to identify their language background.

Next, the analysis deals with the different ways through which the parents either learnt Breton or came into contact with Breton, namely the various channels of language transmission. In addition, it highlights the absence of a Breton connection of a certain number of parents.

9.5.2.1 Parents' mother tongue

Of the 29 respondents, all lived with their spouse (no parents said otherwise), providing language transmission data for 58 parents.

Nearly all parents (55/58) had French as their first language (see Table 22). This was the case for both mothers and fathers.

Only two of the 58 respondents reported Breton as their mother tongue.

This sample of parents (who had chosen Breton-medium schooling for their children) therefore, had virtually no experience of family transmission of Breton.

Table 22: Mother tongue of the Breton parents (N of parents: 58)

Parents' mother tongue	N
Breton	2
French	55
Other	1
Total	58

9.5.2.2 Grandparents' mother tongue

The 29 respondents (who provided language data for the 58 parents whose children were in Breton-medium schools) were also able to give information on the first language of their parents and their partner's, facilitating the analysis of the first language of 116 grandparents.

The findings are as follows:

- 42 of these 116 (36%) grandparents of the children in Breton-medium schools had Breton as their first language.
- this proportion was higher for the paternal grandparents of the children (at 41%) in comparison to the 31% of the maternal grandparents of the children who had Breton as their first language.

Such longitudinal information over two generations provides a picture of the language of each household, language stability and the opportunity for intergenerational transmission of the Breton language – if the children’s grandparents are found to be native Breton speakers. With a higher proportion of Breton speakers along the paternal line, the expectation is to find more fathers being transmitted Breton. The topic of language reproduction will be analysed below.

9.6 Respondents’ route to Breton language acquisition and transmission

9.6.1 Exploring intergenerational language transmission

A point already made in the theoretical section is that language reproduction tends to take place when both parents speak or can speak the language and even this does not guarantee the acquisition of the language, as the following paragraphs will demonstrate.¹²³ For our purposes, intergenerational transmission of Breton will be considered as successful when the level ‘Reasonably well’ and above in Breton has been attained through family and/or community interactions.

9.6.1.1.1 Identification of the first language of the parents’ respondents’ (i.e. grandparents)

By looking further back to the previous generation of the 29 responding households (father and mother, giving a number of 58 individual parents), the mother-tongue patterns of 58 grandparents’ households can be identified.

¹²³ The children’s grandparents within their household did not necessarily use Breton even if they were native Breton speakers or they might not have addressed their children (here, the respondents) in Breton or they expected them to reply using French.

The respondents have been sorted in three different groups according to their language background:

- There were 33 (57%) parents with no Breton-speaking parents.
- There were eight (14%) parents with one native Breton-speaking parent.
- There were 17 (29%) parents with two native Breton-speaking parents (see Table 23).

Table 23: Grandparental households according to their first language (N of parents:58)

First language of the respondents' parents	N	%
Neither respondents' parents with Breton	33	57
One of respondents' parents with Breton	8	14
Respondents' two parents with Breton	17	29
Total	58	100

A small majority of parent-respondents (57 %) did not have parents who had Breton as their mother tongue. (See table above.) However, over a quarter (17) were brought up in households where Breton was the mother tongue of both their parents (i.e. the grandparents of the children in Breton-medium education) and an additional 14% reported that one of their parents had Breton as a first language. Therefore, over a third of parents (25) had at least one parent with Breton.

9.6.1.1.2 Overview of the parents' language background and their level of competence in Breton

Competence levels of the parents could not be systematically predicted on the language background of the respondents, because some parents scored highly despite having no such background in their family.

The majority of respondents fell into the two categories of understanding a 'Few words and sentences' or having 'No Breton' at all (i.e. the left side in the charts below). This was the case whether the receptive skill of listening, i.e. understanding, or the productive skill of speaking was considered.

However, for the 17 parents who were brought up in households where both parents had Breton, the number at good fluency levels for both skills was proportionally higher (red and orange on the charts) than when respondents reported no Breton language background:

-nearly half (eight parents out of 17) had a reasonable level of Breton skills compared to under a fifth (six parents out of 33).

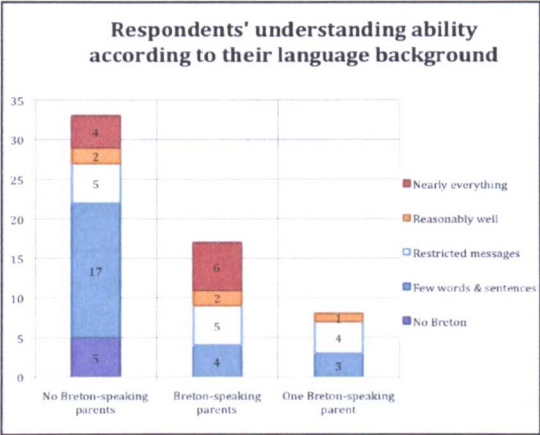


Figure 31: Understanding ability of parents (N:33; N:17; N:8)

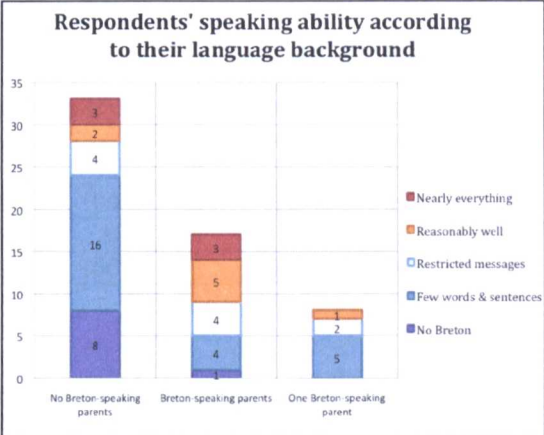


Figure 32: Speaking ability of parents (N:33; N:17; N:8)

The Breton language background of the respondents seemed to have played a role in the acquisition of some Breton.

Yet, it is important to realize that their fluency was not necessarily transmitted via their parents. The next points will look in detail at the link between the language competence, the language background of the respondents and the ways, they acquired fluency of some sort in Breton.

9.6.1.1.3 Analysis of language intergenerational transmission (Breton-speaking parents to respondents)

Respondents' first language

Only two parents had Breton as their first language. (See Table 24.) Language transmission occurred where parents were brought up in households with both parents having Breton as a first language (see Table 22). In one of these two cases, the language was passed on through the relationship the respondent had with her grandparents.

Table 24: First language of the respondents compared with their parents' first language (N of parents:58)

Respondents with children currently in Breton-medium schools					
Respondents' first Language	Households in which respondents grew up (children's grandparents)				
	Neither parent with Breton as mother tongue		One parent has Breton as mother tongue		Both parents have Breton as mother tongue
	N	%	N	%	N %
Not Breton	33	100	8	100	15 89
Breton	0	0	0	0	2 11
Total	33	100	8	100	17 100

Respondents (parents) brought up in a household with at least one native Breton speaker parent

Beside these two successful cases of language reproduction, other parents with a Breton background reported some competence in Breton. Some of them learnt the language in their familial environment and others through courses.

Transmission of Breton to the respondents when one parent is a native Breton speaker

Intergenerational transmission of Breton leading to a full competence did not occur within any households with one Breton-speaking parent.

Of the eight respondents, two learnt the language through direct family interactions.

However, they reported only a basic level of transmission ('Few words and sentences' or 'Restricted messages'). The remaining six claimed no direct Breton language transmission and acquired their competence by studying it. (see Table 25).

For instance, two respondents described that they had "heard" Breton being spoken by their Breton-speaking parent, but they did not participate in the conversation, resulting in an incomplete communicative competence.

Table 25: Respondents' Breton language ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (N of parents:8)

Respondents with children currently in Breton-medium schools		
Respondents' Breton language ability (Understanding)	Households in which they grew up:	
	One of respondents' parents with Breton	
	N	%
No ability in Breton	0	0
Few words and sentences	3	37.5
Restricted messages	4	50
Reasonably well	1	12.5
Nearly everything	0	0
Total	8	100

Transmission of Breton to the respondents when the two parents are native Breton speakers

Even in the 17 households where the respondents grew up with both parents having Breton as first language, transmission did not always occur or it occurred only partially. There were virtually no cases of successful direct intergenerational language transmission – beyond ‘Restricted messages’.

All 17 respondents had some Breton knowledge, although half (nine) acquired their competence solely through courses. (See Table 26 and Figure 33.)

Five respondents with a good fluency were transmitted the language by their grandparents. Out of the other 12 respondents reporting a basic level of fluency, only a quarter (i.e. three) indicated that they had acquired this level of fluency at home with their parents. For the remaining three quarters, it was through courses.

Table 26: Respondents’ Breton language ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (N of parents:17)

Respondents with children currently in Breton-medium schools		
Respondents’ Breton language ability (Understanding)	Households in which they grew up:	
	Both parents have Breton as mother tongue	
	N	%
No ability in Breton	0	0
Few words and sentences	4	28
Restricted messages	5	28
Reasonably well	2	11
Nearly everything	6	33
Total	17	100

The figure below shows the channels of transmission of the Breton language without specifying the level of transmission. It represents only the respondents who grew up in a household where both their parents had Breton as their mother tongue. Nearly half (eight) of these respondents reported no direct transmission at all; only one respondent in four (four) learnt some Breton with his/her parents.

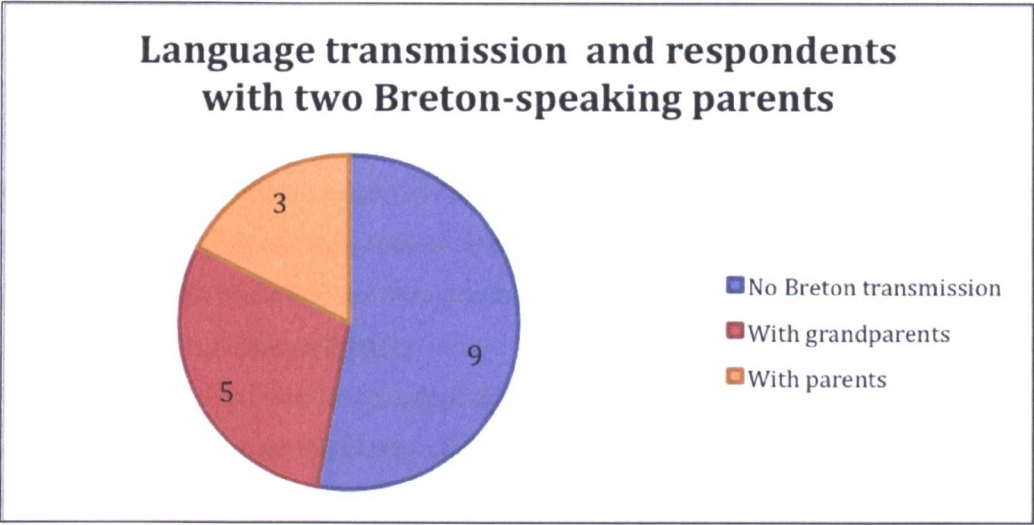


Figure 33: Language transmission and respondents with two Breton-speaking parents (N of parents:17)

9.6.1.2 Language transmission to the children

The language background of the parents who responded of course had its impact on the children.

Of the eldest child¹²⁴ from the 29 households, only five experienced Breton at home (all through their father – two with no prior connection to Breton). 24 had their first Breton-learning experience in the Breton-medium nursery school, arriving there with no competence at all (table below).

Table 27: Where did the eldest child learn Breton? (N of parental households:29)

Place where children learnt Breton	Total	
	N	%
Nursery and Home	1	3
Home	4	14
Nursery	24	83
Total	29	100

Even for the five children with Breton prior to nursery entry, only two had at least a ‘Reasonably good’ competence relative to their age.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Only the eldest child of each household was considered for the data because some children were too young to have started nursery and taking them into account would have skewed the data.

¹²⁵ During the interview, it was added “Breton competence corresponding to a satisfactory fluency relative to your child’s age”.

Following the disrupted language transmission experienced by the parents, there were virtually no cases of continuous intergenerational language transmission. Though, one could still expect that some Breton transmission from the grandparents to the children occurred bypassing the parents altogether.

However, 13 respondents raised the issue that their children could not communicate with their native Breton-speaking grandparents. In fact, this observation was common to nearly ALL parents who had a Breton background. Many parents gave two reasons for this lack of communication through Breton:

- The differences between the standard and vernacular varieties of Breton.
- The disagreement over the choice of school.

Many parents made comments similar to the following ones:

“Old folks are persuaded that learning Breton is a waste of time, it’s like going back in time”.

“My parents keep criticizing our choice of school”.

“My mother said that this language should not be learnt”.

“My parents are afraid of my children failing at school”.

“My parents reject our choice of school; they make no effort to communicate through Breton”.

“Discussion through Breton between grandparents and children are just impossible”.

“With the native speaking old folk, she [the child] doesn’t speak much, she doesn’t understand them”.

“The literary Breton is nothing like the one from here”.

These comments highlight the division between the native speakers and the learners regarding the use of Breton, even when they are close relatives. This is evidence that the intergenerational transmission of the language bypassing the parents is over.

9.6.1.3 Summarizing points

Familial transmission has regressed (even stopped) across the generations to the point at which the family has ceased to operate as a means of passing on Breton to children now at school, and indeed this has been already the case in relation to their parents.

Language transmission rarely happened in the households of the respondents as they were growing up, even when both parents had the minority language. And where it did, it did

not come from the respondents' parents but from the respondents' grandparents (and even this occurred in only a minority of the respondents).

In the group of respondent mothers, there is no case of a satisfactory level of direct intergenerational Breton transmission. Among the male respondents, there was hardly any case of successful language reproduction without generational interruption. As for the children, hardly any unbroken intergenerational Breton transmission could be traced from great-grandparents through to this present cohort of children.

Moreover, the Breton-medium children who have native Breton-speaking grandparents have not established any links with them through the medium of Breton.

This puts active intergenerational transmission to some extent three generations removed from the children receiving their education through Breton – that is, lost to the parents of the children, and the grandparents, but back in their great grandparents' generation.

9.6.2 First contact with the Breton language

The previous section highlighted where language transmission had broken down intergenerationally in families.

The data linking the respondents and the time in their life when they came into contact with Breton represents another way to identify a family language transmission of some sort.

9.6.2.1 Parents and their first contact¹²⁶ with the Breton language

45 of the adults in the respondents' households reported that they had learnt Breton, i.e. over three quarters of the 58 adults (see Figure 34, colours blue and red). Of these 45 who had learnt Breton, less than a quarter (13) learnt Breton as children – the rest as adults (32). The remaining quarter of parents (13) considered they had 'No Breton' and among this latter category, there were four couples.

¹²⁶ Contact does not necessarily imply that the language was properly learnt at that point, but that it was around and had been heard.

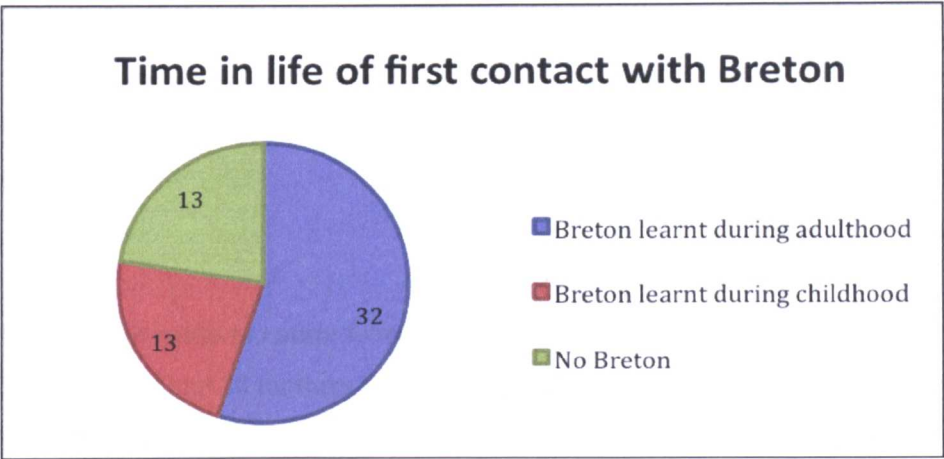


Figure 34: Time in life of first contact with Breton (N of parents:58)

Overall, 24 mothers and 21 fathers reported that they had learnt Breton – no real difference here (see figures below, colours blue and red). However, half of the fathers (11 out of 21) learnt Breton in childhood. For mothers, the equivalent figure is two out 24. Less than a third of the mothers had Breton speaking-parents, compared to nearly half of the fathers. As a consequence, three quarters (22) of mothers specified that they learnt Breton during adulthood. This reflects the gender bias in intergenerational transmission of the language (see the discussion section).

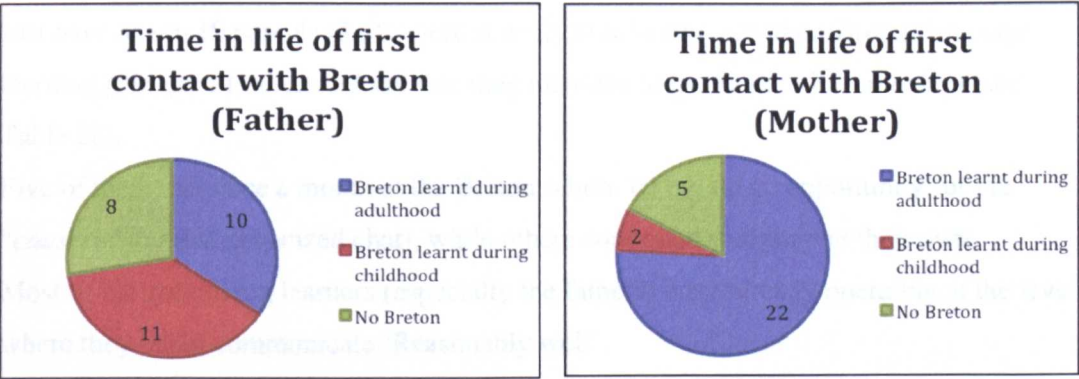


Figure 35: Time in life of first contact with Breton for the fathers and the mothers (each chart N of parents:29).

Indication of improving Breton skills	N
Yes	8
No but Opened to	14
No	39
Total	58

9.6.3 Parents and the development of their Breton skills

The previous section showed that most parents had a basic knowledge of Breton. It is worth finding out if at the time of the inquiry, they were seeking to improve their linguistic knowledge.

9.6.3.1 The route to competence

Seven fathers and 20 mothers had taken language lessons in Breton. For a very high proportion of both the fathers and the mothers, this was their only route to learning Breton: Breton was new to five of these fathers and to 17 out of the 20 mothers.

More mothers than fathers had taken courses (the previous section highlighted that fewer mothers had experienced some Breton intergenerational transmission).

16 mothers indicated that even if they had not taken classes or had stopped, they kept learning Breton thanks to their children and they compared this to a shared experience with their children.

The respondents outlined their reasons for taking Breton language classes.

Two overwhelming reasons emerged:

- Their commitment to supporting their children.
- Their drive to sharing as much as possible of the learning experience with their children.

Just over one in 10 parents (8/58) were actively continuing with their Breton language learning (though 14 others did say that they intended to get back to it, some day) (see Table 28).

Five of them met once a month at the Breton school taking up an opportunity for the “*causerie*” (casual organized chat), while others continued studying on their own.

Most of the continuing learners (especially the fathers) were already operating at the level where they could communicate ‘Reasonably well’.

Table 28: Parents and the development of their Breton skills (N of parents:58)

Intention of improving Breton skills	N
Yes	8
No, but I intend to	14
No	36
Total	58

The parents talked about how their language learning had worked for them.

During the interview, many parents were aware of their lack of fluency:

“I gibber, my level does not allow for any meaningful conversation”.

“I speak double Dutch in Breton”, etc.

They explained that despite their best intentions, they did not get round to learning Breton fluently through lack of motivation and/or lack of time. Some started studying Breton by distance learning or on their own with the help of DVDs, but they quickly dropped out.

Here are some of the collected comments:

“I did the first five lessons and after, I stopped; it’s more difficult when one is adult”.

“I gave up after a while, it’s too time consuming and there is not enough time with the work at home”.

“I bought a DVD to learn, but I stopped after the first lesson: one needs time to learn”.

Others followed a taught course, but thought they were getting nowhere:

“I’ve learnt Breton for two years, with nothing much to show for it”.

“I am a perpetual beginner, I’d have liked to go on, but well, I have more important things to do”.

“My memory is my big problem: either I don’t have any or it is highly selective: one hour after having read, I’ve forgotten it all!”

These examples are representative of the type of comments collected during fieldwork.

A number of parents (nearly half) had made the effort of learning some Breton through classes, but there was perhaps not enough language learning support available to help them through the stages where they might lose heart.

9.6.3.2 Summarizing points

The previous points presented the disrupted intergenerational channels of language transmission for Breton and also highlighted the difficulty of acquiring Breton through formal means. As a result, the parent population under scrutiny lacked the Breton language skills their parents or grandparents may have had and lacked the Breton language skills that their children looked set to acquire.

The following points will investigate the use of Breton within the family unit and the surrounding community.

9.7 Language use of respondents and their children

Given the very low level of Breton language skills reported by the responding households for each parent, it is perhaps not surprising that in all instances, French was the only household language reported as being in use.

The aim of the next paragraphs is to examine the place of Breton in the daily routine of the respondents, its use within the family circle in order to establish the extent of its use as a normal language of communication.

9.7.1 Language use and the parental households

9.7.1.1 Language use at work and for recreational pursuit

Breton at work:

- Less than four households reported to use some Breton at work.

Breton for church:

- No use of Breton was reported in the religious domain.

Breton for culture and in the media:

- Less than four households used Breton in the cultural context of concerts or *festoù-noz* (equivalent to present day *ceilidhs*).
- Radio and television offered more potential for Breton language exposure and this was taken up by 22 of the 29 responding households in listening to radio and by 16 of the 29 in watching television (even though choice of Breton language programmes was limited).
- Reading offered most opportunities. All the households reported that they read Breton books (meaning they could all read), but no magazines.

It is clear that all the respondents' activities were mostly associated with the use of French. Most parents included in the category 'Reading books' their Breton course books and their children's books or simplified version of books in Breton. A few respondents also reported that they listened to Breton on the radio, without understanding much of the programmes:

"I listen only for the musical side of the language, it is a music I like listening to".

"I understand nothing, but I leave it on".

"I understand nothing apart from a few words".

So, the amount of Breton used by the respondents in their daily activities was low and there were no functions or activities linked to an exclusive use of Breton. Moreover, the activities some parents reported to carry out in Breton involved mostly a passive reception of the language like the understanding skills.

It is valuable to understand if the respondents' low level of Breton use during their activities can be extrapolated to their use of Breton with people. For that reason, it makes sense to evaluate the extent of Breton use by the respondents within their close network.

9.7.1.2 Language use with close relations, neighbours and teenagers

The chart below confirms that the respondents interacted using French. It is also noteworthy to notice that all the respondents used French to speak to teenagers.

In very few instances, a small number of respondents all linked to rural activity reported they spoke Breton, although they added:

“My level does not allow me to go very far”.

“I gibber along”.

Three respondents reported to have “tried to speak Breton” with their family. One of them said:

“With my grandmother, I’ve tried, but it lasted for at about half a day, till we got fed up”.

It was also the case with the other two respondents, who added “it was not the same Breton”.

A fluent Breton learner deliberately chose to speak only French, even with his older Breton-speaking neighbours:

“I have established relationships in French with our neighbours to be normal; speaking Breton could be misinterpreted; it could be perceived as being aggressive and I would be stigmatized”.

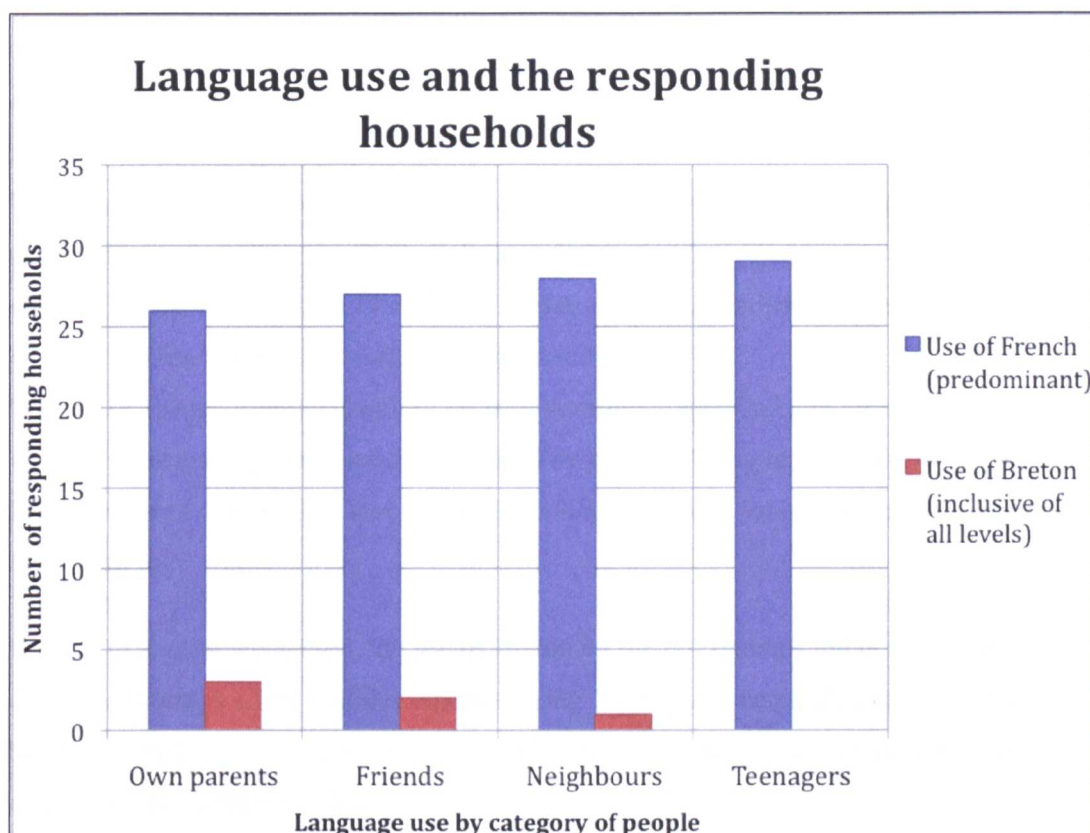


Figure 36: Language use and the respondents (N of parental households:29; N of responses:145).

9.7.1.3 Language use within the households with children

The respondents' everyday language use with their children followed a similar pattern.

Only 6/29 (21%) households reported speaking Breton to some extent (often “as a game”) to their children, although virtually no families reported a sustained use of Breton.¹²⁷

When quizzed about their practices in a follow-up question, only three households (10%) said they often code-switched between French and Breton; these parents also voiced their frustration because despite their effort, as soon as a French word entered the conversation, it would revert back to French. One parent added that regarding the use of Breton with his child, he did not want to overdo it through fear of ostracizing him:

“As a family, we don’t really want to force our child to use Breton in order not to cut him off from the others”.

¹²⁷ Graph is not available to protect anonymity and confidentiality.

When asked for a description of their Breton use, most parents reported a very basic level or none at all. Under half of the households (13) said they did not use Breton at all (one even used English to give a “headstart” to her children). Less than a third of the other respondents (nine) reported to use a basic level of Breton. Within these nine households, Breton use consisted at best of short commands used “for fun”, words or greetings (“careful”; “time to go to bed”, “hello”, etc.). Four other households also used props to create a Breton environment like CDs in Breton or songs; a father confided that he read bedtime stories “even if [he did] not understand them”.

The use of French is at the centre of all their communication and Breton is used at a basic level for a recreational purpose, if used at all by parents. Many respondents trying to use Breton referred to the effort involved to learn it and to use it, which they did not feel ready to commit to.

Even during homework-time, the use of Breton by the respondents did not significantly increase, although a few families reported using ‘Breton almost all the time’ (see figure below). A mother shared her concern regarding her son’s ability to understand while reading aloud in Breton to her:

“He keeps stumbling and I wonder if he gets anything; any commentaries are always in French; I really wonder”.

This graph also shows that the language used for leisure is French within every household; it reinforces the importance of French as the family and bonding language.

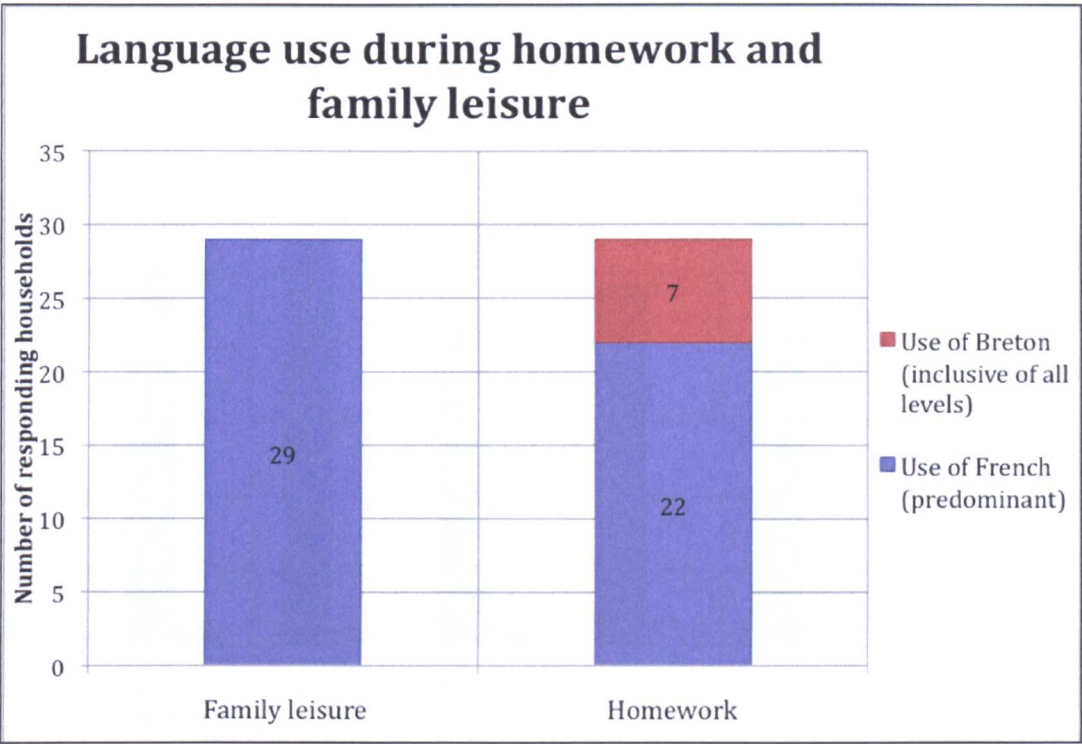


Figure 37: Language use during homework and family leisure (N of parental households:29)

9.7.2 The children’s language use according to parents

9.7.2.1 With adults, siblings and friends

Almost no parents or households used Breton as an everyday language to communicate. It is therefore valuable to scrutinize the language practices of their children in order to evaluate the impact a Breton-medium education had on the children’s language use with the chart below. (This chart presents the children’s language pattern according to their parents’ evaluation.)

The overwhelming majority of children used French to interact with the people close to them. No use of Breton was reported for the variables ‘Siblings’ or ‘Friends’.

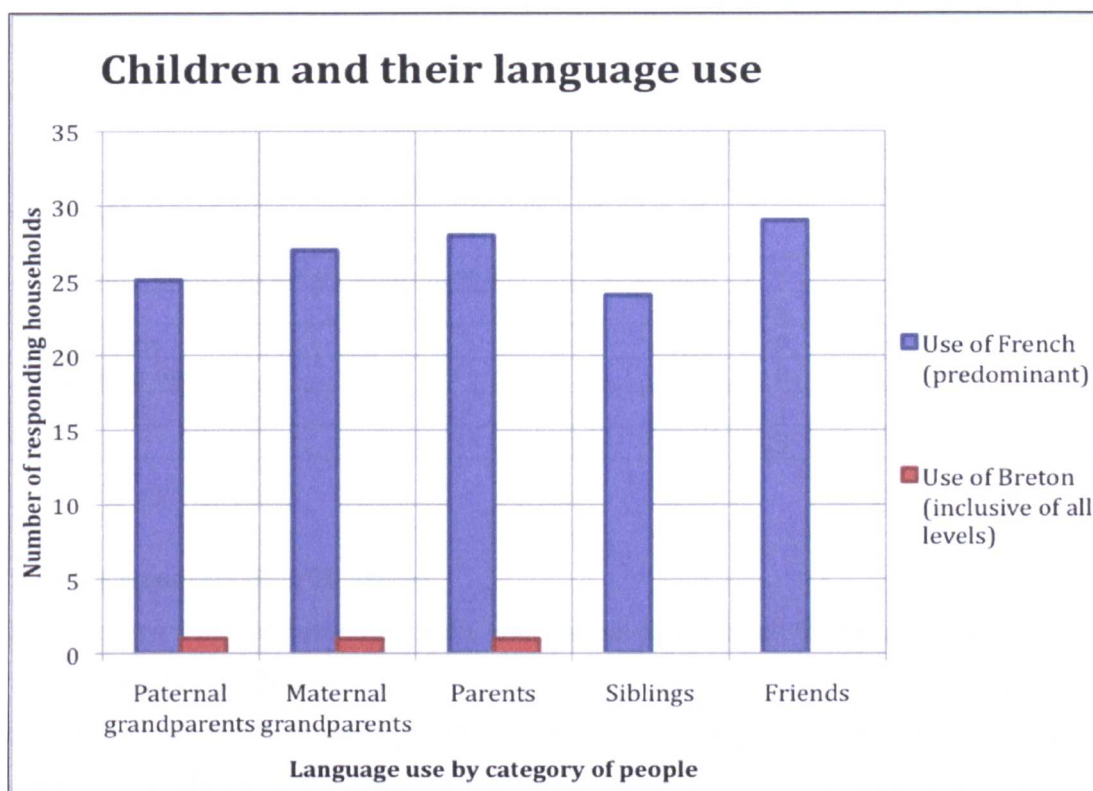


Figure 38: Children and their language use according to parents (N of parental households:29)

Children and Breton use at home

Similar to the previous findings, 96% of children used mostly French. In very few instances, respondents proudly described that their children naturally spoke Breton ‘all the time’ (see Table 29). However, it was observed in the home that even when spoken to in Breton, those children portrayed as speaking Breton in fact replied in French. Some parents commented on their children’s limited vocabulary in Breton or their refusal to make some effort to speak Breton:

“After all, they have done that all day”.

“It’s tiring”.

“When they are tired, they don’t want to bother their head with Breton”.

“At home, we don’t bother them with it”.

“When his grandmother tries just a few words, he withdraws; it’s too much of an effort for him”.

“He just shows no interest in speaking it”.

Other respondents confided that their children reproached them for having them learn Breton:

“It’s for you that I am doing this [learning Breton] and not for me”.

“It’s pointless”.

Table 29: Frequency of Breton use by children within the households (N of parental households:29)

Frequency of Breton use by children within the households	N	%
Never	18	62
Occasionally	10	34
Most of the time	0	0
All the time	1	5
Total	29	100

Starting a conversation in Breton

In nearly two thirds of households (18), children never addressed their parents in Breton, while a third (10) of families mentioned that their children used Breton occasionally. When queried more specifically, these parents included in this category instances of Breton use when they overheard their children playing on their own or with dolls, singing or reading Breton books aloud. These latter examples should be discounted, as they do not constitute an interactive use of the language.

Parents were also realistic regarding the use of Breton later in their children’s own adult life. 24 responding households (83%) did not think Breton would be their children’s main language. In addition, a few respondents reminded me that it was not the aim of their children receiving Breton-medium education in the first place.

Some parents associated its potential use to their children embracing a career where Breton would be needed.

9.7.2.2 With their own age group

Among friends

According to the parents’ evaluation, most children (26) used only French to communicate with their friends. A few parents were bewildered to report that their children did not use a word of Breton, even though their best friends went to the same Breton-medium school: “everything is always in French”. Another parent made sure her children spoke only French when not in the classroom, including the playground: “I am careful of that”.

During leisure activities

French was again the language used by all the children during extra-curricular activities. The only instance of Breton use referred to some Breton terminology during a traditional Breton activity similar to wrestling called '*gouren*'.

9.7.2.3 Summarizing points

The findings of this section show that the parents' and children's language practices were centred around the use of French not only within the family circle, but also within the surrounding community.

Breton was not the natural language children used to communicate with others and it seemed to be a language for use in the school premises, or even exclusively within the classroom.

9.8 Conclusion

The analysis presented a population of highly qualified parents aware of educational developments and keen to offer the best education available to their children. They selected the Breton-medium school as a better alternative to the surrounding mainstream primaries; the class sizes were smaller and it offered especially the opportunity for their children to become bilingual. This additional skill was sought for the other benefits it developed in maximizing their children's intellectual performance; it also brought a sympathetic cultural awareness to the children's education.

This cultural aspect was not exclusively associated with Breton; it was inclusive of all the other minority cultures linked to the notion of a cultural heritage. In fact, the majority of parents (57%) were not connected to Breton through their family.

Regarding their Breton competence, 75% of parents had at best limited language skills. For the parents with a Breton language background, this poor fluency in Breton could be explained by the lack of intergenerational Breton transmission due to a changing

sociolinguistic context or when the transmission occurred, it was incomplete in nearly all cases.

The parents' overwhelming basic level of competence in Breton meant that very few parents could use it as an everyday language of communication within their home, outside or at work. It was unsurprising to find that 83% of children arrived without Breton at nursery. Once the children had started Breton-medium school, the most likely time parents (24%) used some Breton was during homework. For the overwhelming majority of parents, there was in fact no expectation that Breton would be the main language of the home. Breton use after school was not part of the parents' expectations.

For most parents without a language background, the minority language occupied only a marginal place (i.e. during homework time) within the households in question, something which the very small number of parent-activists and the teachers were quick to frown upon. The use of the minority language beyond set phrases was not envisaged or was not pursued after the first sentences for several reasons; some families were communicating through a third language, or the parents felt their fluency in the minority language was insufficient and this impeded the flow of the conversation, or the amount of effort involved in using the minority language was too demanding.

As for the children's Breton use, parents commented that communication with the native Breton-speaking grandparents was virtually impossible due to the lack of intercomprehension between the standardized taught variety and the vernacular and also the lack of will on the part of most grandparents. Parents also commented that none had heard their children speaking Breton to their close friends, even though they were in the same Breton-medium class.

These findings show there was not much transmission, but parents were holding on to their cultural links, even though not mainly to do with language, so the impact of Breton-medium education re transmission 1) is not utilizing a family network – after all it cannot; 2) is not supporting intergenerational transmission; 3) is providing a preferred option which adds to awareness of the culture if not the language and 4) gives a win-win situation of a good school, middle-class values, a supportive approach, and a link to heritage. There is still a wish for a Breton-medium education, albeit the language link is not the leading one. Breton forms the first part of the analysis and it is informative to see if similar or different patterns are found in the Scottish side of the inquiry regarding Gaelic.

WESTERN ISLES

9.9 Parents' socioeconomic profile

9.9.1 Levels of education

All the parents had some educational qualifications (see Table 30). Nearly three fifths (25/44) had attained a high level of qualification. Under a third (13) of parents were educated to degree level and over a quarter (12) had a diploma.

Comparing these figures to the figures of the surrounding area (Census 2001), it is clear that the population of parents was not representative. The proportion of parents with a level of further education was much higher: 57% had a level above Higher, a figure nearly three-fold the one established by the Census 2001.

Table 30: Level of qualification of the parents compared to 2001 Census data (N of parents:44)

Parents by highest level of qualification (1)	Figures for parents		Figures for output area (2)
	N	%	%
University Degree	13	30	17
College Diploma	12	27	5
Scottish Higher Grade Qualifications and equivalent	9	20	13
'O' Grade	10	23	21
No qualifications or outwith these groups	0	0	44
Total	44	100	100

(1) Scale applied by Census 2001 (Scotland's Census Results Online 'Definition – Highest level of Qualification')

(2) Census 2001 for the output area in question (Table UV21: Qualifications). Figures for the selected locations in the Western Isles were introduced in the methodology chapter (see also Appendix D).

9.9.2 The parents' occupations

The parents were spread over several occupational categories; the main one included over a third (36%) of professional parents (scale from Social Grade definition – Census 2001, less the unemployed category) (see Table 31).

A direct comparison with Census 2001 shows here again, that the proportion of parents belonging to the professional socioeconomic category was higher than the 2001 census

figure: 36% compared to 19% (Table 31 and Figure 40). It also identified that the skilled parents were underrepresented.

Moreover, no parents were unemployed, although 6.3% (table Census 2001: ‘Economic activity’) of the economically active within the output area were out of work.

Table 31: Socioeconomic position of parents in employment (occupation-based) (N of parents:42 (1))

Socioeconomic position of parents (occupation-based)	Figures for parents		Figures for output areas (2)
	N	%	%
Professional	15	36	19
Intermediate	9	22	18
Skilled	9	21	50
Manual (semi-routine & routine)	9	21	13
Total	42	100	100

(1) Two parents were unwaged and were not represented in this table.

(2) The 2001 census for the output areas in question. Figures for the selected locations in the Western Isles were introduced in the methodology chapter (see also Appendix D). (Table CAS039 Census 2001: Occupation by industry; in Appendix D: Table 62) (Some crofters classified in the manual occupations did not correspond to that category due to the scale and professionally-run business in line with their high level of qualifications.)

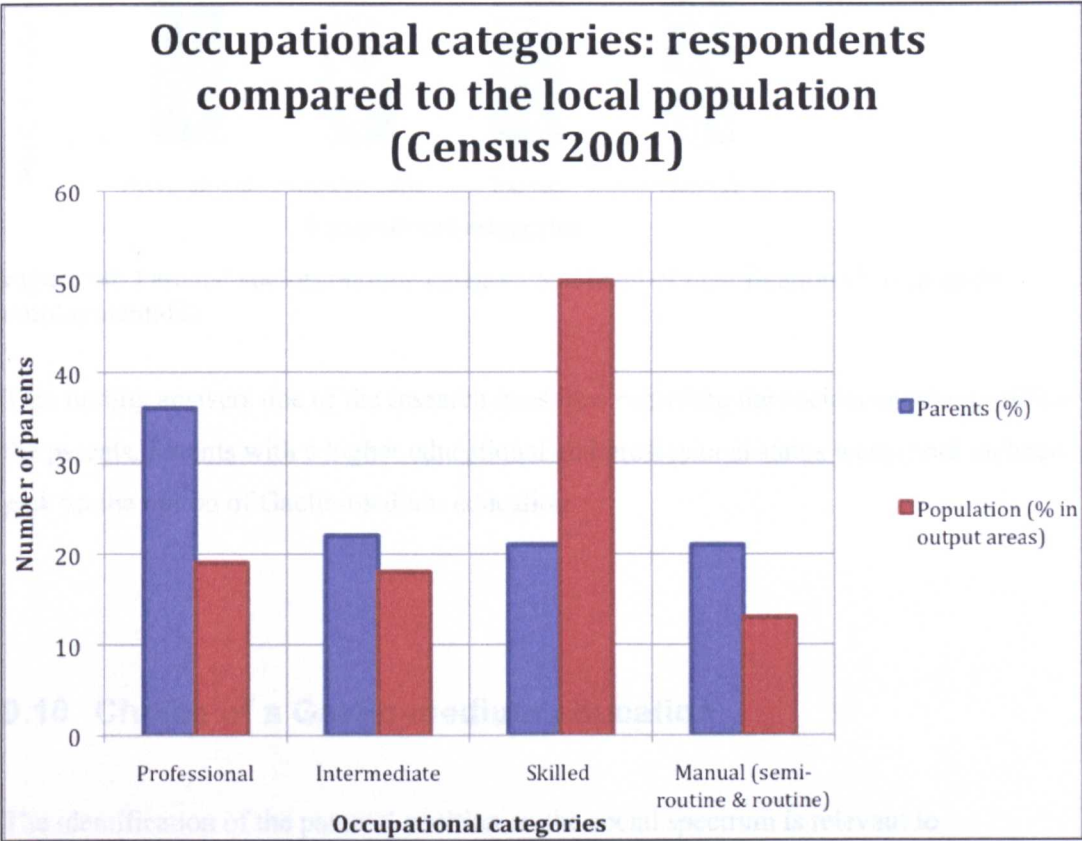


Figure 39: Occupational categories: respondents according to the local population (Census 2001) (N of parents:42)

The correlation between the two variables (occupation and qualification) confirms the weighting towards professional and well-educated parents. The chart below also shows that many respondents were employed below their qualification level.

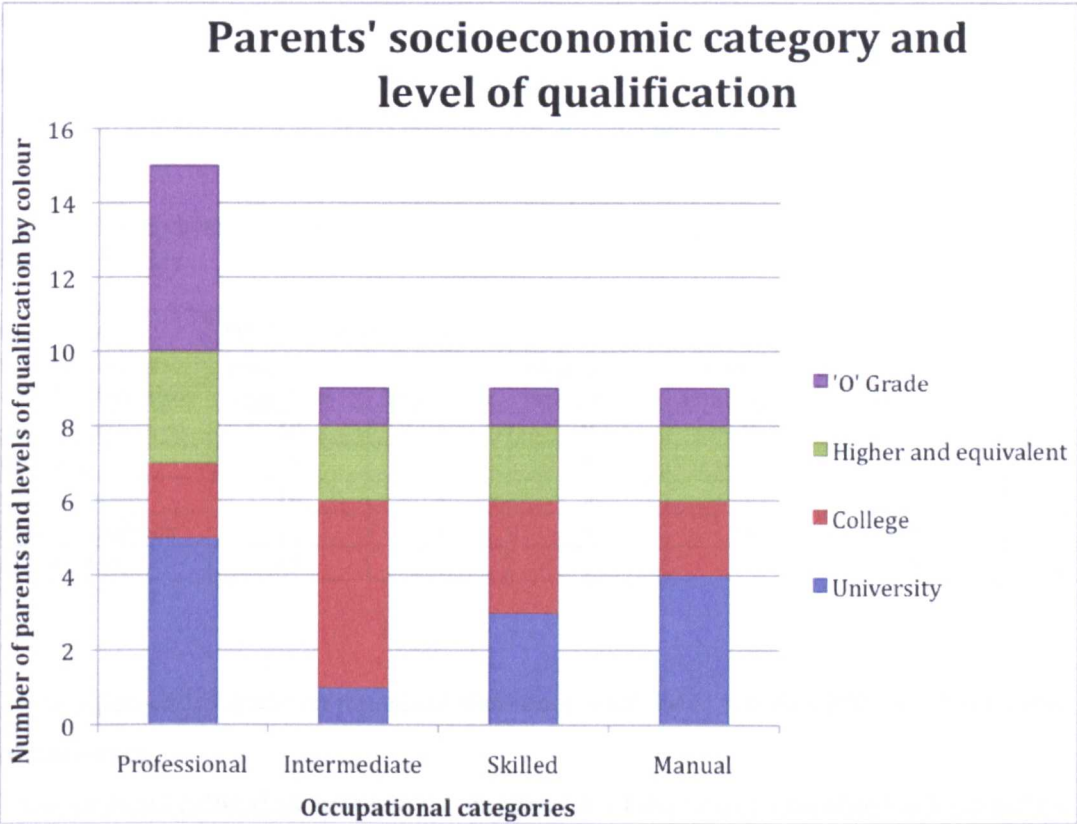


Figure 40: Parents' socioeconomic category and level of qualification (N of parents in employment:42)

This finding answers one of the research questions regarding the socioeconomic profile of the parents. Parents with a higher educational and professional status were more inclined to pick up the option of Gaelic-medium education.

9.10 Choice of a Gaelic-medium education

The identification of the parents' position on the social spectrum is relevant to understanding the reasons for their choice of schooling. Their beliefs and attitudes have also played a role in their decision in favour of GME, but these topics will be introduced in

the following section. This section will present and analyse in detail the reasons for their choice of GME.

9.10.1 Important factors and detailed analysis of the criteria

Over four fifths (18) of responding households considered that bilingualism played a key role in their choice of school (Table 32); two thirds (15) also highly rated the immersion method to deliver bilingual skills and the school ethos taking account of Gaelic culture.

Table 32: Important factors for choosing a Gaelic-medium school (N of parental households:22)

Factors for choosing Gaelic-medium education	Order of importance					N
	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Of little importance	Unimportant	
Bilingualism	18	4	0	0	0	22
Immersion	15	6	1	0	0	22
Smaller classes	10	5	3	1	3	22
Teaching methods	12	3	3	4	0	22
Gaelic culture	15	4	3	0	0	22

To the open-ended question regarding their choice of GME, families offered a wide-range of responses.

These covered cultural aspects and the importance of the Gaelic language itself (in red on Figure 42) which parents often linked to educational advantages (in blue):

- 31 (43%) responses had a link to Gaelic (either the language or the culture).
- 41 (57%) responses were connected to the educational benefits children would gain.

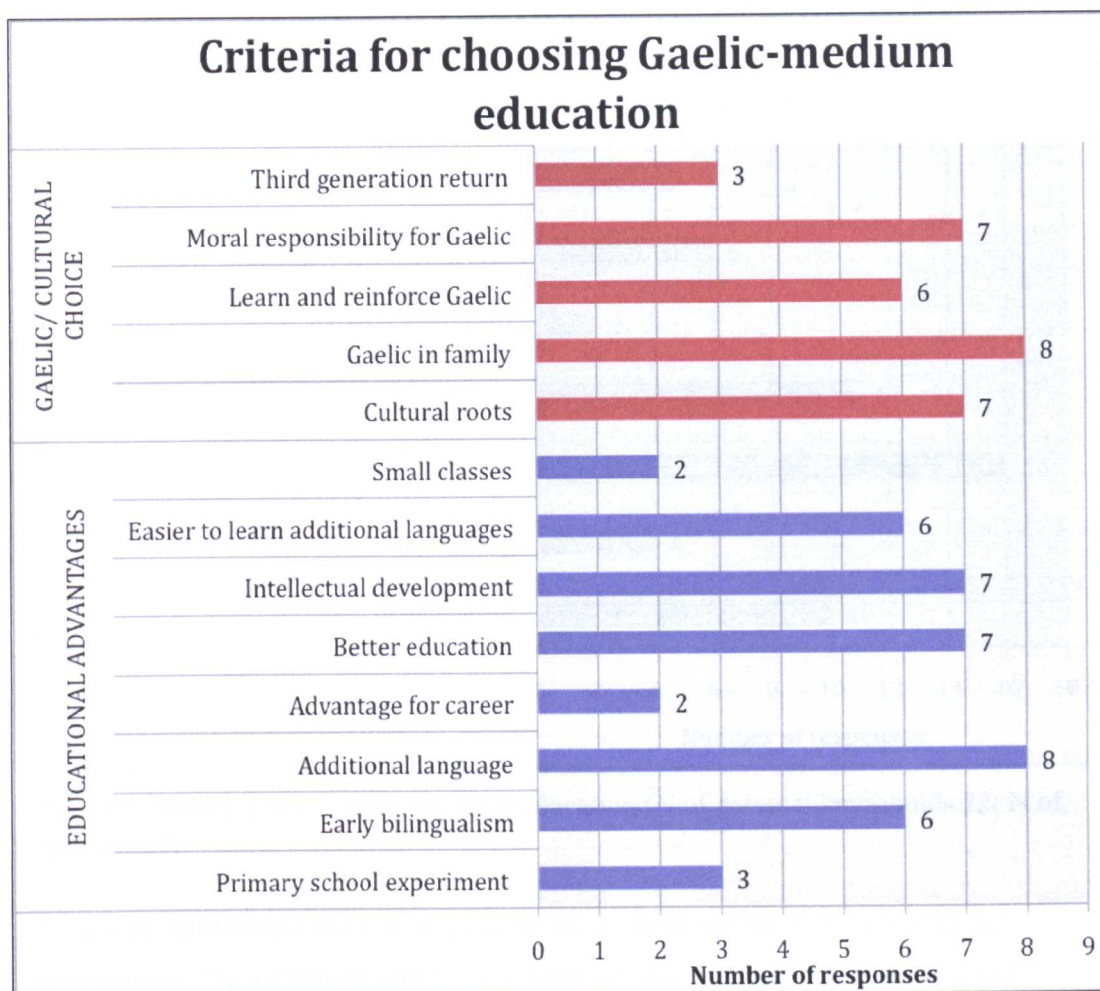


Figure 41: Criteria for choosing Gaelic-medium education (N of parental households:22; N of responses:72)

9.10.2 Advantages of Gaelic-medium education

The advantages parental households most often mentioned were (see figure below):

- The intellectual development bilingualism through immersion could bring (16 or 73%).
- Bilingualism was an excellent skill to acquire (10 or 45%).
- The confidence GME would give to their children (11 or 50%).
- The smaller class size compared to mainstream education (nine or 41%).

To their mind, all of these factors justified their choice and would contribute to a successful first stage in the education of their children.

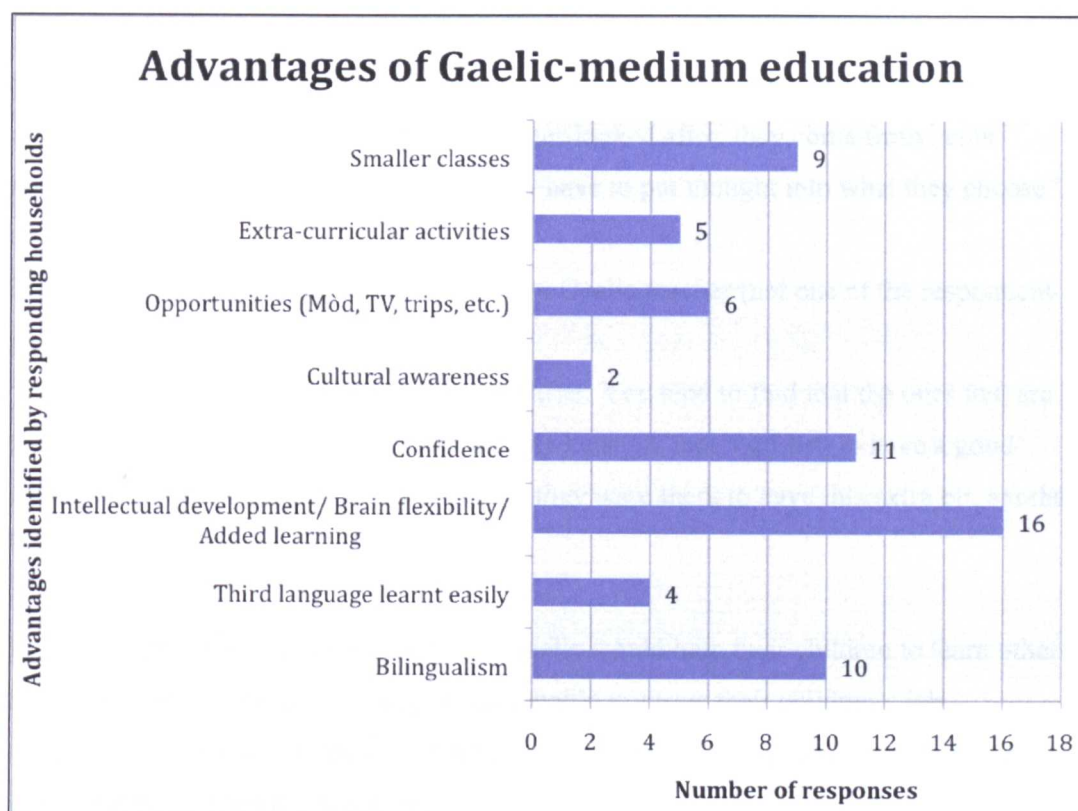


Figure 42: Advantages of Gaelic-medium education (N of parental households:22; N of responses:63)

All the parents believed that learning Gaelic would be beneficial for the intellectual development of their children and that it would increase their ability to learn a third language. Many parents commented that:

“It is the process of learning a language that matters”.

“After, they can learn French or what have you. It cannot be wrong to have another language: it expands their mind”.

“It is an added bonus for the kids”.

For other parents, GME was “better than mainstream”, it provided “a superior education” because the curriculum was delivered through the medium of two languages.

Half of the parental households (11) also referred to the enhanced “brain” capacity their children would benefit by following a GME:

“It helps the brain to develop”.

“It increases the brain connections”.

“The children learn to use their brain in other ways, it makes it easier to use it in the long run”.

“They’ll get faster at picking things”.

“If you do a lot more work, you get a lot more brain”.

“I like pushing them all the time, I like stretching their mind”.

Some parents even remarked on the social differences between GME and mainstream education: “Gaelic-medium children are better-looked after, they come from better families. It is a choice parents make, so they have to put thought into what they choose”.

This finding resonates with the interview of a Gaelic teacher (not one of the respondent-parent):

“In this class, they [pupils] are well-looked after. You tend to find that the ones that are in the Gaelic-medium units have parents that are keen for their children to have a good education; they are keen for them to get on, they want them to have this extra bit, another language”.

Every household believed that fluency in Gaelic would help their children to learn other languages and 19 (86%) also thought that it could improve their children’s job opportunities. (Answer to the follow-up question to the closed question number 14 in the semi-structured interview schedule.)

Unsurprisingly, during the interviews, most parents shared their concern about providing the best for their children’s education and GME seemed to fulfil many of their educational requirements with the added benefit of Gaelic or of a second language.

Regarding Gaelic, over three quarters believed it was very important for their children to have the language, while for the remaining quarter it was felt important. (Answer to Question 14 in the semi-structured interview schedule.)

The majority of families (13) linked their choice of GME with heritage and identity (see figure below); the “Gaelic heritage” would be supported and/or reinforced through education, perhaps ensuring that some or more transmission of Gaelic occurred through that channel.

Over a quarter (six) of parental households felt a moral responsibility towards Gaelic, they “do [their] bit for Gaelic”. One parent remarked that:

“Fifteen years ago, [she] was more relaxed about Gaelic, now there is a sense of urgency”. Some were confident that GME would instill Gaelic on a permanent basis: “Once they [the children] have learnt the language properly, they’ll never lose it”.

The parents without a Gaelic-speaking background were also interested in the enriching aspect of learning about another culture; for them, it was more about introducing their children to some cultural awareness in order to broaden their mind, it was “a gift to the children”.

Only a very small number of parents specifically mentioned that they thought GME was a “natural choice” because it was the language of the family and they wanted their children to become fully bilingual; GME represented “a way to reinforce their Gaelic”.

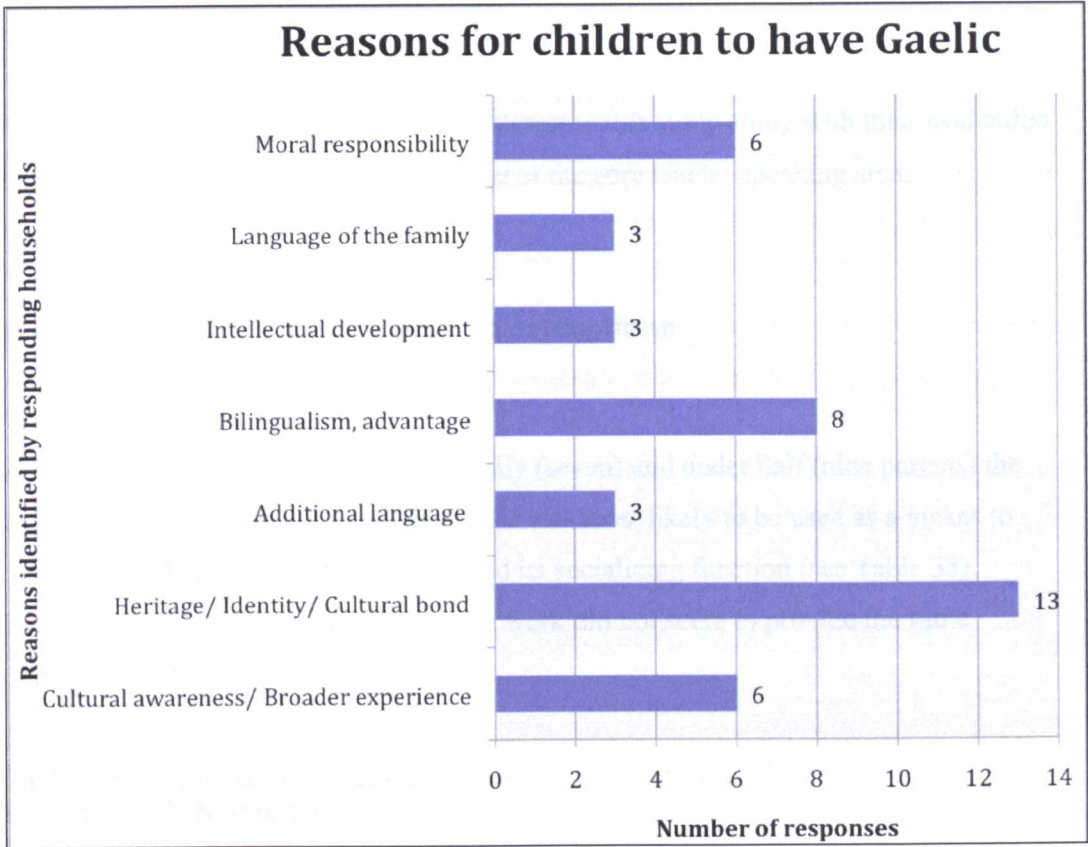


Figure 43: Reasons for children to have Gaelic (N of parental households: 22; N of responses:42)

All parents were satisfied with the education their children received at the GMU. They had opted for GME based on their appreciation of the quality of the teaching their children would receive; they were all aware of the advantages early bilingualism was supposed to have on children.

Gaelic was also important for many parents, albeit for different puposes. The parents connected to Gaelic believed that GM schooling reinforced some transmission of Gaelic; for the other parents, it offered their children the chance to learn through the medium of another language and provided cultural awareness.

9.11 Parents' perceptions about Gaelic

The reasons for the choice of GME, although central to this inquiry, informed only one aspect of the parents' views. Their perceptions of the Gaelic language and the surrounding Gaelic-speaking community are also of interest to this study along with their evaluation of Gaelic use as an everyday language in one of the core Gaelic-speaking areas.

9.11.1 Situations with Gaelic and perceptions

9.11.1.1 Situations with Gaelic

A third of households designated the family (seven) and under half (nine parents) the upper-age group as situations where Gaelic was most likely to be used as a means to interact on a daily basis. They emphasized its socializing function (see Table 33). Formal institutions like school, church or work did not seem to provide the same opportunities for the use of Gaelic.

Table 33: Places and situations where Gaelic is most likely used (N of parental households:22; N of responses:34)

Places and situations where Gaelic is most likely to be used	Parents' responses
Church	2
School	3
Work	5
Home/Family	7
Socializing opportunities (like shops, friends' homes)	9
Upper-age group	8
Total of responses	34

This compartmentalized use of Gaelic corresponds to its diglossic position within the community. However, in small communities, people can belong to several networks formal

and informal most of the time involving the same people. They tend to permeate one another's lives, therefore separate domains might not be the most important cause for this divide.

The parents' responses to a follow-up question (number 56 in the semi-structured interview schedule) made clear that the principal reasons for using Gaelic were:

- Having shared a common upbringing (12 households).
- The presence of fluent speakers (11 households).

9.11.1.2 Perceptions about Gaelic

The overwhelming majority of responding households believed that Gaelic was used by old people (16) and consequently its use was declining (21). 13, though, expected learners to have a positive impact on the revitalization of Gaelic.

Continuing with the beliefs of parents regarding the future of Gaelic, the general feeling was pessimistic or uncertain (see Figure 45 in dark blue):

Nine families believed Gaelic was becoming extinct especially on the island. One respondent remembered that:

"Before the whole environment was in Gaelic, the integration of incomers was through Gaelic, now the balance has changed".

Another one compared the level and the number of people speaking Gaelic when she was young with the current situation, only to conclude:

"Both have plummeted".

One parent referred also to the under 30s on the island "nearly all-English [speaking]".

Six parents were convinced that:

Gaelic had "no future on the island".

"People could not care less about the language, especially when they have it from birth".

Therefore, some parents felt its future laid with learners or as a cultural language, only in its standardized variety:

"Learners realize the value of Gaelic, [whereas] the native speakers particularly from the islands are complacent; they have it, but don't speak it; ironically, it's not valued here".

"They work harder at their Gaelic on the mainland than native speakers here".

Other responding households were more upbeat about the prospect of Gaelic (in light blue on the figure). For them, Gaelic was at a critical point, but its survival depended on the will

of the people, the generation of the GM children and on an increased role in official functions.

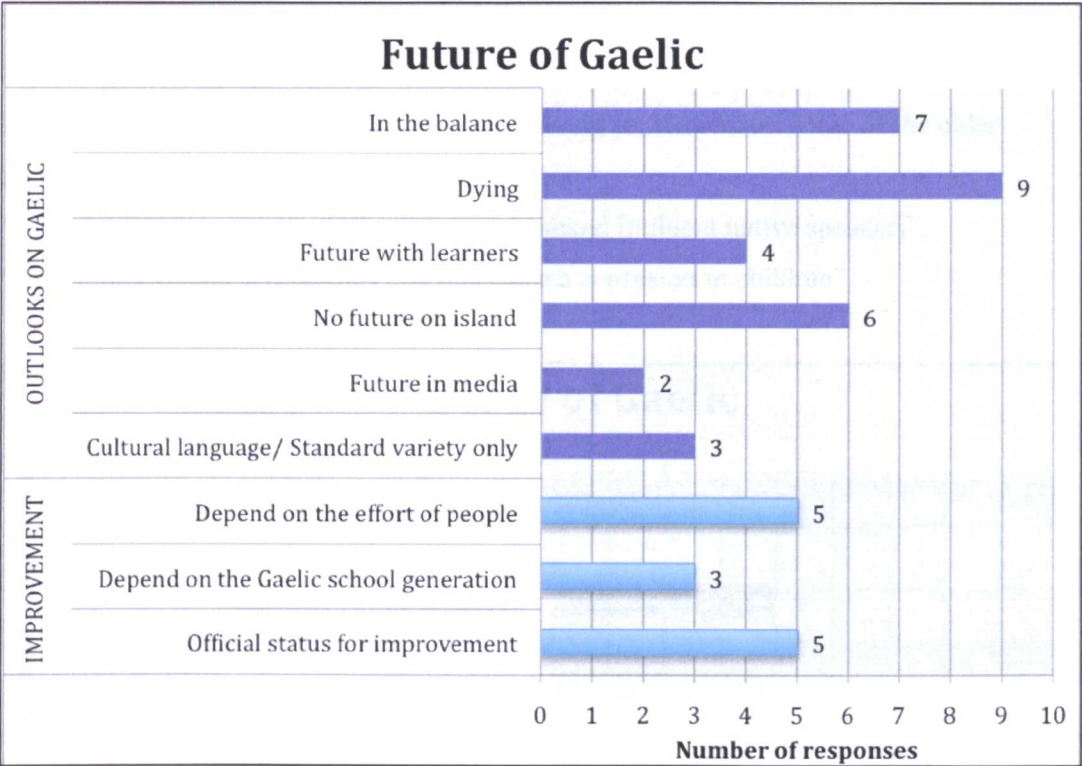


Figure 44: Future of Gaelic (N of parental households:22; N of responses:44)

9.11.2 Image of Gaelic

Virtually every household noticed a change in the image of Gaelic (see Figure 46). The overwhelming majority of parents (17) noticed the improvement in the image of Gaelic with its raised profile in the media. They thought that:

“It has changed for the better”.

“The stigma has gone”.

“It’s now seen as an advantage to get a good job”.

Over a third of the responding households felt that Gaelic had become trendier (eight households) and that it attracted younger and more learners (nine households) and people gained more confidence.

However, seven families regretted the lack of enthusiasm on the part of many islanders for Gaelic revitalization. A few parents even reported that they had chosen GM education against their own parents’ advice.

Some parental households (six) commented on the differences in the Gaelic they used as first language speakers and the standardized language they could hear being promoted. A few parents said:

“The image of Gaelic is more modern but in doing so, it alienates some of the older speakers”.

“The standard language is difficult for my husband [a fluent native speaker]”.

“A different Gaelic is promoted and this creates confusion in children”.

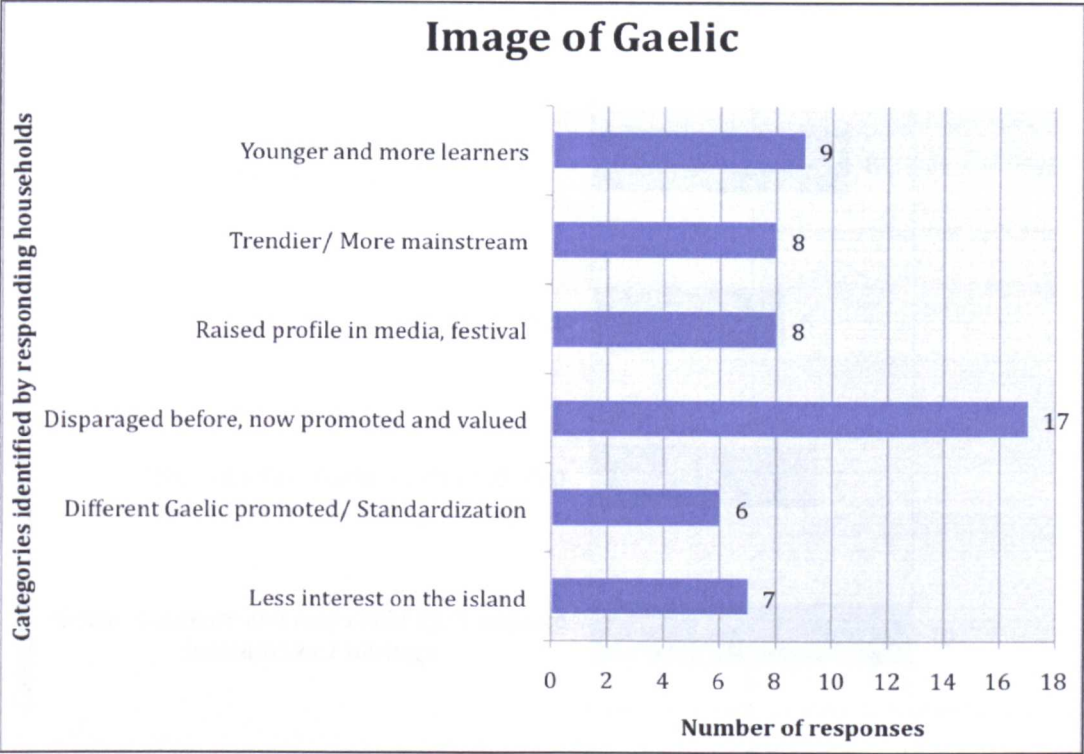


Figure 45: Image of Gaelic (N of parental households:22; N of responses:55)

Overall, 18 (82%) families reported a change in their own attitude towards Gaelic with an increase in their commitment (seven repoding households answered that they were ‘fairly supportive’, while 15 believed to be ‘very supportive’).¹²⁸

¹²⁸ At that point, another question in the schedule asking about the nature of their support would have been illuminating.

The most influential factors triggering a positive outlook on Gaelic are illustrated on the Figure 47.

Nearly half of the families (10) confided feelings of responsibility and urgency for the survival of Gaelic. Some respondents also stated that the birth of their children had been the impetus to reflect on the importance of Gaelic.

Over a third (eight) linked their increased interest in Gaelic to their choice of GM education for their children.

Around a third of households (seven) reported that the improved profile of Gaelic at institutional levels had heightened their awareness of Gaelic.

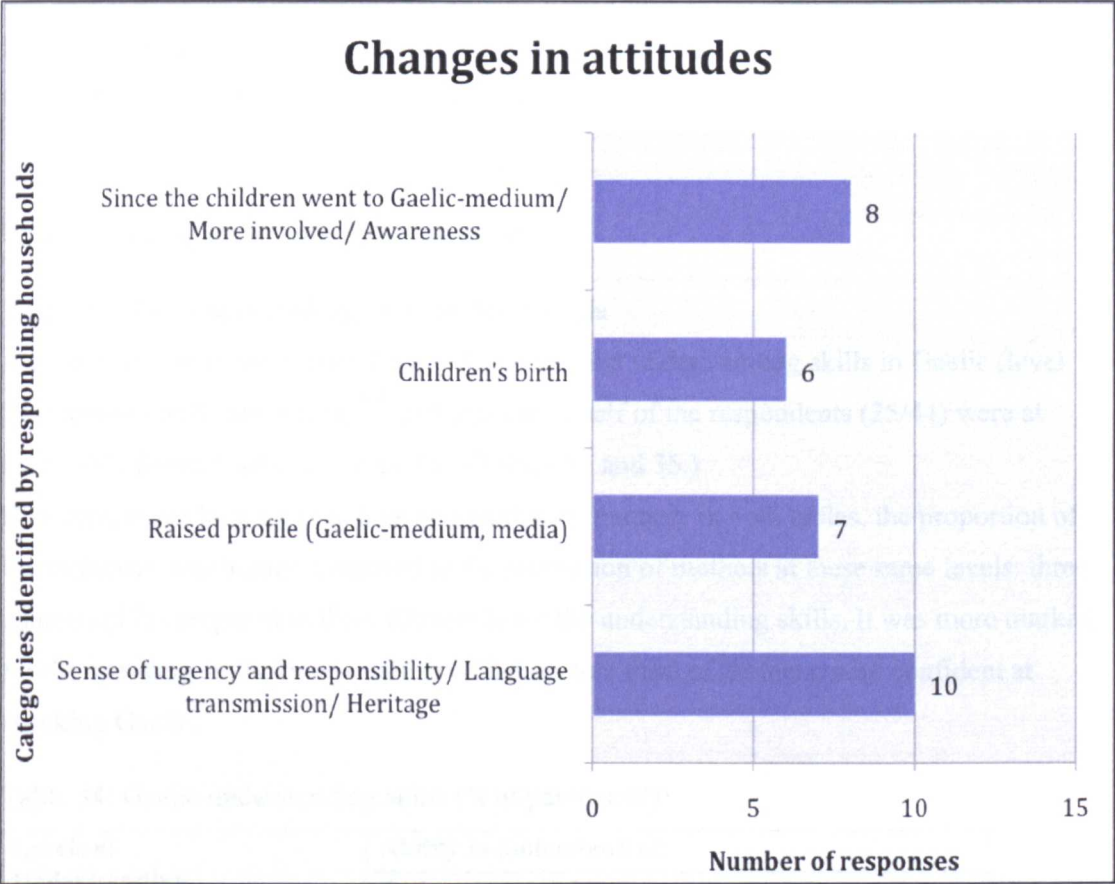


Figure 46: Changes in attitudes (N of parental households:22; N of responses:31)

Few words and concepts	1	5	9
Restricted messages	4	6	10
Reasonably well	2	5	7
Not too good	13	7	20
Not good	22	12	34

9.11.3 Summarizing points

Most parents perceived Gaelic to be in danger of extinction or in a critical position. 14 (64%) households expected learners to improve its situation, although over a quarter of

10% Speakers are considered to be living when their skills reach level "Reasonably well" and above

families did not see any future for Gaelic on the island. Few respondents mentioned that children in GME would lead to the revitalization of Gaelic.

Despite this gloomy picture, they nearly all acknowledged the improvement in the image of Gaelic and some parents identified their interest having been triggered by issues of transmission and responsibility in the midst of urgency.

9.12 Parents and Gaelic language: competence and background

The previous sections positioned the parents within their social milieu, identified the families' reasons for choosing GME and presented their beliefs and attitudes towards Gaelic. The Gaelic language skills of the 44 parents will now be scrutinized in this section.

9.12.1 Language competence by skills

9.12.1.1 The understanding and speaking skills

A clear majority of the respondents (68%) had good understanding skills in Gaelic (level 'Reasonably well' and above)¹²⁹ and more than half of the respondents (25/44) were at least fairly fluent Gaelic speakers. (See Tables 34 and 35.)

However, when looking at fathers and mothers separately in both tables, the proportion of fluent fathers was higher compared to the proportion of mothers at these same levels: three quarters (17) compared to three fifths (13) for the understanding skills. It was more marked for the speaking skills: three quarters of fathers to a third of mothers were confident at speaking Gaelic.

Table 34: Gaelic understanding skills (N of parents:44)

Levels of Understanding	Ability to understand of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Gaelic	0	2	2
Few words and sentences	1	3	4
Restricted messages	4	4	8
Reasonably well	2	6	8
Nearly everything	15	7	22
Total	22	22	44

(The bold dividing line in the middle of this table and the following ones separates the non-fluent above from the fluent Gaelic speakers below).

¹²⁹ Speakers are considered to be fluent when their skills reach level 'Reasonably well' and above.

Table 35: Gaelic speaking skills (N of parents:44)

Levels of Speaking	Ability to speak of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Gaelic	0	3	3
Few words and sentences	2	5	7
Restricted messages	3	6	9
Reasonably well	3	1	4
Nearly everything	14	7	21
Total	22	22	44

9.12.1.2 The reading and writing skills

Nearly half of the parents (20) reported good reading skills ranging from ‘Reasonably well’ to ‘Nearly everything’. The table 36 (see bold and italics) shows two distinct groups: on the one hand, a group of 18 parents reasonably confident regarding their reading skills and on the other hand, another group of 14 with only a basic level of competence in reading. There were no real differences in the levels between men and women.

Table 36: Gaelic reading skills (N of parents:44)

Levels of Reading	Ability to read of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Gaelic	2	3	5
Few words and sentences	7	7	<i>14</i>
Restricted messages	3	2	5
Reasonably well	9	9	<i>18</i>
Nearly everything	1	1	2
Total	22	22	44

The table 37 presents a different situation for the writing skills: under a third (13) of the respondents had developed a good ability in writing (‘Reasonably well’ and ‘Nearly everything’), leaving the majority of parents with basic writing skills.

The figures reveal that a higher proportion of mothers were more proficient at writing than fathers: five mothers had attained the highest standard compared to two fathers who reached that level.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ In this group of parents, more women reported to have better writing skills than men probably due to their occupations often being specifically Gaelic-related.

Table 37: Gaelic writing skills (N of parents:44)

Levels of Writing	Ability to write of:		
	Fathers	Mothers	All Respondents
No Gaelic	3	6	9
Few words and sentences	10	6	16
Restricted messages	4	2	6
Reasonably well	3	3	6
Nearly everything	2	5	7
Total	22	22	44

9.12.2 Parents and the development of their Gaelic skills

At this point, it is relevant to find out if any parents intended to improve their competence in Gaelic.

The overwhelming majority of parents (80%) had no intention to learn or develop their skills in Gaelic (Table 38).

Only seven (over a fifth) of parents responded that they were learning Gaelic, although it was informal for six of them: four were “picking it up from the surrounding community”. For two others, their learning experience was tied to their children learning Gaelic (through the homework they brought home).

Table 38: Parents and the development of their Gaelic skills (N of parents:44)

Currently learning or developing existing Gaelic skills?	N	%
Yes	7	16
No, but I intend to	2	4
No	35	80
Total	44	100

9.12.3 Summarizing points

Around two thirds of parents had good understanding and speaking skills. It was especially true for the fathers. Overall, the respondents were less proficient at reading and writing, with the majority of parents reporting only a basic ability in writing in Gaelic or even no ability at all, and very few parents planned to improve their Gaelic skills.

9.13 Exploring intergenerational language transmission

As with the Breton analysis, it is relevant to group the households in which the 44 individual parents grew up according to their own parents' mother tongue patterns, that is the grandparents of the children currently in GME. This will give data on 88 grandparents and it will allow us to identify the extent of Gaelic intergenerational transmission.

To begin with, the language background of all the households in which the 44 parents grew up will be identified and classified in three distinctive groups, then these grandparental households will be further refined according to the gender of the respondents to situate where Gaelic transmission has occurred.

9.13.1 Overview of the parents' language background and their level of competence in Gaelic

The grandparental households in which the 44 parents of the Gaelic-medium children grew up have been sorted in three groups according to their language background (Table 39):

- 13 (30%) parents had no Gaelic-speaking parents.
- eight (18%) parents had one native Gaelic-speaking parent.
- 23 (52%) parents had two native Gaelic-speaking parents.

With the two figures above aggregated (eight and 23), it shows that over two thirds of respondents (31) had at least one of their parents with Gaelic as a first language;¹³¹ this left only under a third (13) of the respondents growing up within households where Gaelic was not the mother tongue of either of their parents.

Table 39: Respondents' grandparental households according to their first language (N of parents:44)

First Language of the respondents' parents	N	%
Neither respondents' parents with Gaelic	13	30
One respondents' parents with Gaelic	8	18
Both respondents' parents with Gaelic	23	52
Total	44	100

¹³¹ Being a native speaker of Gaelic does not necessarily imply that the person uses the language to communicate, although it is more likely to occur. This point would need to be expanded on in a further inquiry.

The language of the grandparental households had an effect on the competence of the respondents in Gaelic.

It is clear that parents brought up in a household where Gaelic was spoken had the best language competences (‘Reasonably well’ to ‘Nearly everything’ – in orange and red in the graphs below). For instance, 27 out of 31 parents growing up with at least one Gaelic-speaking parent reported understanding Gaelic ‘Reasonably well’ or above that level. This is also valid for the speaking skills with 22 parents describing their level at least equivalent to ‘Reasonably well’ (Figures 48 and 50).

These parents though seemed to be less confident with the written skills (reading and writing), especially so with writing skills (Figures 49 and 51). Under a quarter (7/31) reported to have at least reasonably good writing skills. This is not surprising as native speakers of Gaelic often use that language only to communicate orally.

As for the remaining respondents with no Gaelic-speaking parents, their level of competence in any Gaelic skills rarely went beyond the ‘Restricted messages’ level (from a shade of darker blue to white on all the charts), indicating a basic grasp of Gaelic.

These findings show that the Gaelic language background of the respondents had a positive impact on their fluency in Gaelic.

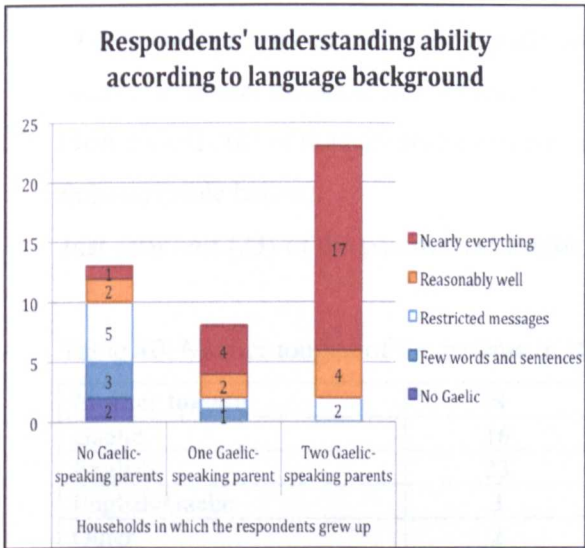


Figure 47: Parents’ understanding ability according to language background (N:13; N:8; N:33)

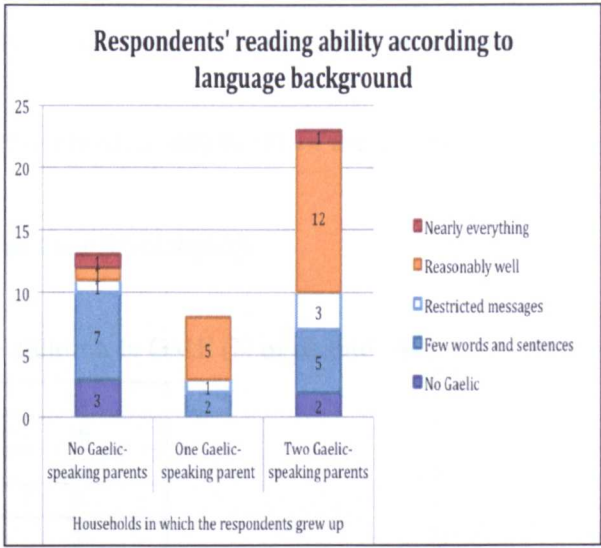


Figure 48: Parents’ reading ability according to language background (N:13; N:8; N:33)

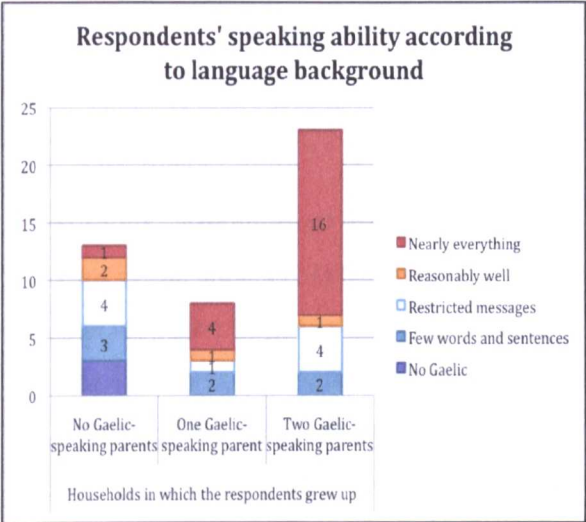


Figure 49: Parents' speaking ability according to language background (N:13; N:8; N:33)

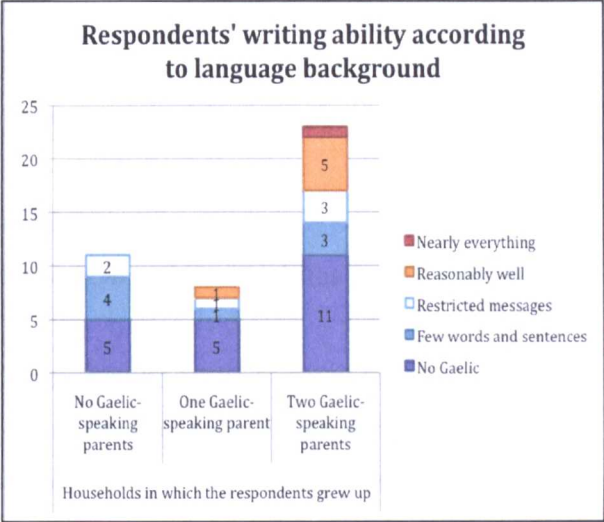


Figure 50: Parents' writing ability according to language background (N:13; N:8; N:33)

9.13.2 Parents' mother tongue and fluency in Gaelic

The section above highlighted that most respondents brought up in Gaelic-speaking households had a good level of fluency in Gaelic, especially in the oral skills. A detailed examination of the mother tongue of each parent as well as the native language of their own parents on the paternal and maternal sides will inform more precisely on the intergenerational transmission of Gaelic. Over a third (16) of the parents had Gaelic as their mother tongue (11 of them being fathers) (table below). Just over half (23) of the parents had English as their first language.

Table 40: Mother tongue of the parents of the children in GME (N of parents: 44)

Mother tongue	N	%
Gaelic	16	36
English	23	52
English/Gaelic	3	7
Other	2	5
Total	44	100

This overall figure would benefit from a refined analysis; previous findings have established that fathers had a better level of fluency in Gaelic, therefore, it is appropriate to explore the paternal and maternal lines separately.

9.13.3 Language background and the fathers' mother tongue

9.13.3.1 The fathers' mother tongue and that of their parents

Half of the fathers (11) had Gaelic as their mother tongue and for two fifths (nine), English was their first language (see table below).

The 22 fathers gave information on the language background of their own parents, providing data on the 44 paternal grandparents of the children currently receiving GME. Going back a generation with these paternal grandparents, it was identified that their first language was:

- Gaelic for two thirds of them (29/44).
- English for just over a quarter of them (12/44).

Table 41: First language of Fathers (N:22) and Paternal GRANDPARENTS (N: 44)

Mother tongue	FATHERS		PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS	
	N	%	N	%
Gaelic	11	50	29	66
English	9	41	12	27
English/Gaelic	1	5	1	2
Other	1	4	2	5
Total	22	100	44	100

9.13.3.2 Intergenerational transmission of Gaelic as a mother tongue

The grandparental households in which the fathers grew up have been sorted as in the previous section in three groups according to their language background (see Table 42):

- six (27%) fathers had no Gaelic-speaking parents;
- three (14%) fathers had one native Gaelic-speaking parent;
- 13 (59%) fathers had two native Gaelic-speaking parents.

A majority of fathers (59%) grew up in households where both parents had Gaelic as their mother tongue.

Table 42: Fathers’ grandparental households according to their first language (N:22)

First Language of the respondents’ (fathers) parents	N	%
Neither respondents’ parents with Gaelic	6	27
One respondents’ parents with Gaelic	3	14
Both respondents’ parents with Gaelic	13	59
Total	22	100

Out of the 13 grandparental Gaelic-speaking households on the paternal side, two thirds (nine) of fathers had Gaelic as their mother tongue (figure below). This level of intergenerational language reproduction is fairly high – although it is not systematic. A factor likely to explain in part this finding is the geographical stability of the paternal households; additional collected data showed that all the fathers with two Gaelic-speaking parents grew up on the island, where they were surrounded by their extended family network.

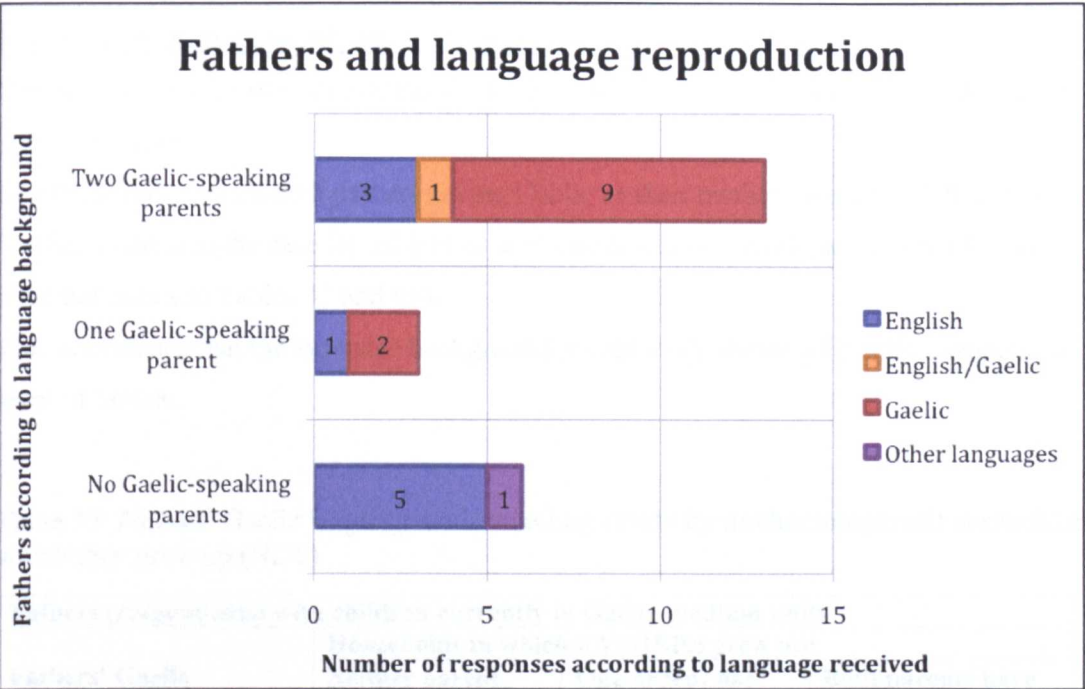


Figure 51: Fathers and language reproduction according to language background (N of fathers:22)

9.13.3.3 Acquisition of Gaelic

The way fathers came to learn Gaelic depended on their parents' language background. All fathers (13) with two Gaelic-speaking parents heard Gaelic being spoken to some extent at home. For 12 of the fathers with at least one Gaelic-speaking parent, language transmission occurred via their parents.

For some of the fathers brought up in a non-Gaelic-speaking home, they sought out to learn that language through courses or by being immersed in the Gaelic-speaking community.

Among the 22 fathers, 12 mentioned that the community played a role either by introducing them to Gaelic or by enabling the more advanced speakers to operate through the medium of Gaelic.

School had hardly any input in the acquisition of the language because most fathers did not study Gaelic (only three fathers chose a Gaelic option at school).

9.13.3.4 Language background and competence in Gaelic

Fathers and the household they grew up in

Where they came from Gaelic-speaking homes it was expected to find fathers with higher levels of fluency.

Nearly all fathers with both parents having Gaelic as their mother tongue were fluent in Gaelic; it was also the case for all fathers with one Gaelic-speaking parent (see numbers in bold and italics in Tables 43 and 44).

This is evidence that the language background played a significant role in the competence level of fathers.

Table 43: Fathers' Gaelic language understanding ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (N:22)

Fathers (respondents) with children currently in Gaelic-medium units						
Fathers' Gaelic Language Ability (Understanding)	Households in which FATHERS grew up:					
	Neither parent with Gaelic as mother tongue		One parent has Gaelic as mother tongue		Both parents have Gaelic as mother tongue	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No ability in Gaelic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Few words & sentences	1	17	0	0	0	0
Restricted messages	3	50	0	0	1	8
Reasonably well	1	34	0	0	<i>1</i>	8
Nearly everything	0	0	3	100	<i>11</i>	85
Total	6	100	3	100	13	100

Table 44: Fathers' Gaelic language speaking ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (N:22)

Fathers (respondents) with children currently in Gaelic-medium units					
Fathers' Gaelic Language Ability (Speaking)	Households in which FATHERS grew up:				
	Neither parent with Gaelic as mother tongue		One parent has Gaelic as mother tongue		Both parents have Gaelic as mother tongue
	N	%	N	%	N %
No ability in Gaelic	0	0	0	0	0 0
Few words & sentences	2	33	0	0	1 7
Restricted messages	3	50	0	0	1 8
Reasonably well	1	17	0	0	1 8
Nearly everything	0	0	3	100	10 77
Total	6	100	3	100	13 100

9.13.4 Language background and the mothers' mother tongue

9.13.4.1 The mothers' mother tongue and that of their own parents

The mother tongue pattern of the children's mothers presents a sharp contrast with the fathers':

-Around two thirds (14) had English as their mother tongue.

-Just over a fifth (five) of them had Gaelic (see Table 45).

Over half (25) of the maternal grandparents of the GM children had Gaelic as their mother tongue. This figure shows that the intergenerational transmission of Gaelic as a first language to the mothers has been halved in favour of a switch to English as only five mothers had Gaelic as their first language.

Table 45: First language of Mothers (N:22) and Maternal GRANDPARENTS (N:44)

Mother tongue	MOTHERS		MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS	
	N	%	N	%
Gaelic	5	23	25	57
English	14	64	17	39
English/Gaelic	2	9	0	0
Other	1	4	2	4
Total	22	100	44	100

However, this analysis does not provide a fine reading. Like in the previous section, the group of mothers needs to be classified into households according to the mother tongue of their own parents in order to give information on the level of intergenerational language transmission:

- seven (32%) mothers with no Gaelic-speaking parents.
- five (23%) mothers with one native Gaelic-speaking parent.
- 10 (45%) mothers with two native Gaelic-speaking parents (see Table 46).

Out of the 22 mothers, just under half (10) were born in households where both parents were native Gaelic speakers; over a quarter (five) had only one Gaelic-speaking parent and a third (seven) had both parents speaking English or another language.

Table 46: Mothers' grandparental households according to their first language (N:22)

First Language of the respondents' (mothers) parents	N	%
Neither respondents' parents with Gaelic	7	32
One respondents' parents with Gaelic	5	23
Both respondents' parents with Gaelic	10	45
Total	22	100

9.13.4.2 Intergenerational mother tongue transmission

Mothers did not experience a high intergenerational mother tongue transmission (see Figure 52): even when brought up within a Gaelic-speaking household,¹³² only around a third of these mothers (three) reported to have Gaelic as their first language.

In the households with one Gaelic-speaking parent, two out of five mothers were native Gaelic speakers, although transmission occurred only when their own mother was a Gaelic speaker.

For the other mothers with a Gaelic background who had English or English/Gaelic as their first language, they indicated that Gaelic language transmission had occurred to some extent via their parents or their grandparents.

¹³² Both parents are assumed to speak Gaelic (see previous footnote).

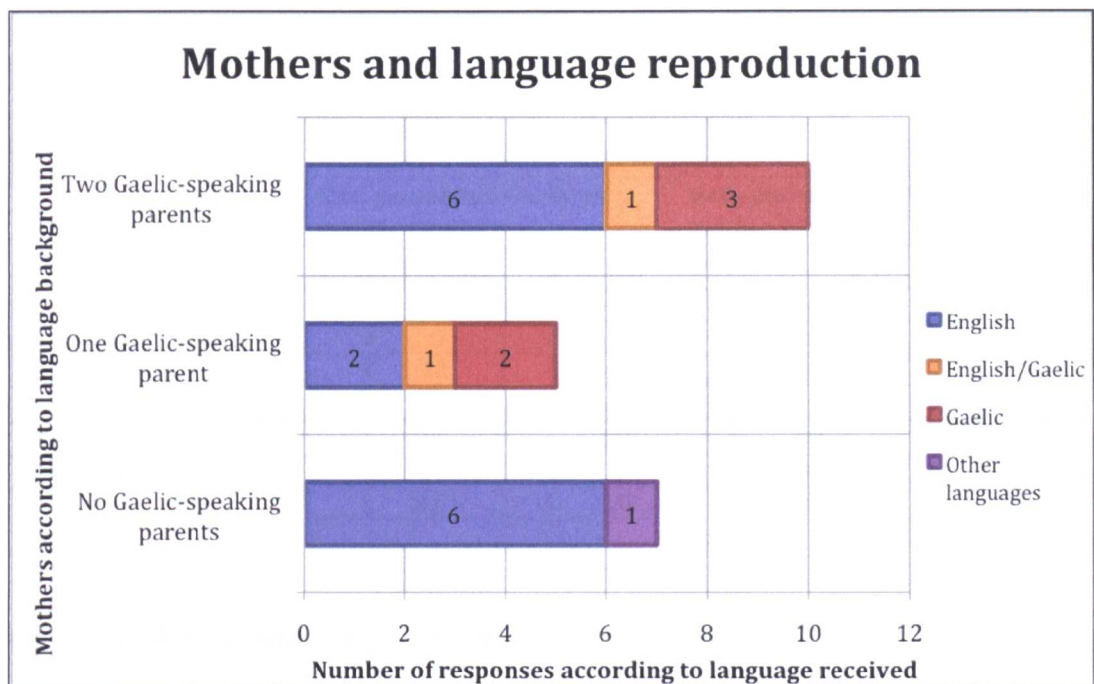


Figure 52: Mothers and language reproduction according to language background (N of mothers:22)

9.13.4.3 The fluency of the mothers

9.13.4.3.1 Mothers with a Gaelic language background

Even if most mothers growing up within a Gaelic-speaking household did not have Gaelic as their first language, the overwhelming majority had still good understanding and speaking skills (see Table 47). It was especially true of the mothers whose parents were both native Gaelic speakers (in bold): nearly all reported to be fluent in Gaelic.

However, considering the speaking skills, it is noticeable that a higher proportion of both sets of mothers felt less confident at communicating through the medium of Gaelic. Nearly half (seven, see italics on the table) of the mothers with at least one Gaelic-speaking parent reported that they could at best communicate ‘Restricted messages’. This finding might be a sign that the Gaelic competence of mothers is weakening.

It was also noticeable that the mothers’ background had an influence on whether they could speak fluently in Gaelic. Therefore, it was relevant to separate the mothers into two groups.

- Mothers brought up on the island (nine mothers).

- Mothers brought up on the mainland (13 mothers).

Table 47: Mothers' Gaelic ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (N:15)

Mothers (respondents) with children currently in Gaelic-medium units								
Mothers' Gaelic Language Ability	Households in which MOTHERS grew up:							
	One parent has Gaelic as mother tongue				Both parents have Gaelic as mother tongue			
	Understanding		Speaking		Understanding		Speaking	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No ability in Gaelic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Few words & sentences	1	20	2	40	0	0	1	10
Restricted messages	1	20	1	20	1	10	3	30
Reasonably well	2	40	1	20	3	30	0	0
Nearly everything	1	20	1	20	6	60	6	60
Total	5	100	5	100	10	100	10	100

9.13.4.3.2 Mothers without a Gaelic language background

The table below shows that all the mothers brought up in a household with no Gaelic-speaking parents had reached at best a basic level at speaking Gaelic. Their ability at understanding Gaelic, although more wide-ranging remained overall basic. This clearly indicates the influence of the family background on Gaelic fluency.

Table 48: Mothers' Gaelic ability by mother tongue of household in which they grew up (N:7)

Mothers (respondents) with children currently in Gaelic-medium units					
Mothers' Gaelic Language Ability	Households in which MOTHERS grew up:				
	Neither parent with Gaelic as mother tongue				
	Understanding		Speaking		
	N	%	N	%	
No ability in Gaelic	2	29	3	43	
Few words & sentences	2	29	2	29	
Restricted messages	2	28	2	28	
Reasonably well	1	14	0	0	
Nearly everything	0	0	0	0	
Total	7	100	7	100	

9.13.4.4 Distinction island/mainland upbringing and acquisition of Gaelic

At that stage, the variable of the area where the 22 mothers grew up was believed to have had an influence on whether they could speak fluently Gaelic. Therefore, it was relevant to separate the mothers into two groups:

- Mothers brought up on the islands (nine mothers).
- Mothers brought up on the mainland (13 mothers).

Acquisition of Gaelic

Out of the nine mothers brought up on the islands:

- Two thirds (six) of them learnt Gaelic at home with their parents and the surrounding community (they were also the ones who scored the highest on the understanding and speaking skills; see table above).
- Three were introduced to Gaelic by their grandparents.
- Three studied Gaelic at school.

13 mothers were raised on the mainland:

- Three of them learnt Gaelic with their grandparents.
- One with her parents.
- Four others learnt Gaelic at school, starting at varied ages – from seven years old to the start of secondary school.
- Five women had either participated in courses, learnt Gaelic on their own, or their children taught them Gaelic.

All of the island-mothers learnt Gaelic either from their parents or their grandparents and they showed a high level of competence in Gaelic. In contrast, none of the mainland-mothers evaluated their speaking ability in Gaelic beyond the level 'Restricted messages', even if seven of them had grown up hearing Gaelic being spoken within the household (four had two native Gaelic-speaking parents and three one native Gaelic-speaking parent).

9.13.4.5 Summarizing points

Mothers with at least one Gaelic-speaking parent showed a low level of intergenerational first language reproduction (five out of 15). This could be partly explained by the fact that more than half of the surveyed mothers moved to the island once adult.

Even so, being 'born and bred' in the Western Isles in an all-Gaelic speaking household did not systematically reproduce fluent Gaelic speakers. This finding confirms the importance of a Gaelic-speaking environment; it also highlights that language shift within the family was already taking place and this despite having both parents native speakers of Gaelic.

It is important to verify if this trend is carried through to the next generation: the children in GME.

9.13.5 Intergenerational transmission of Gaelic to the children and fluency after the Gaelic nursery

9.13.5.1 Children and intergenerational transmission

Around a third of the eldest child (eight) learnt Gaelic at home with their parents and a further two with their grandparents (see Table 49). However, over half of the children (12) learnt Gaelic at nursery.

Table 49: Where did the eldest child (1) learn Gaelic? (N of parental households:22)

Place where children learnt Gaelic?	N	%
Home with grandparents	2	9
Home	8	32
Nursery	12	54
Total	22	100

(1): see earlier note.

The children who learnt Gaelic at home had all one native Gaelic-speaking parent and more often than not (in five cases), both their parents were native speakers. This represented two thirds of the children with a Gaelic-speaking background who were directly transmitted Gaelic.

Going back to the grandparents' generation, a crosstabulation revealed that all these children with Gaelic learnt at home had at least two Gaelic-speaking grandparents. In fact, all of these children but one had both paternal grandparents native Gaelic speakers and the majority of them had also both maternal grandparents speaking Gaelic as their first language.

This showed that the children who were transmitted Gaelic had a continuing language running through their family.

Among the children who were first language Gaelic speakers, a further exploration of the data by selecting the variables 'first language speakers' and 'gender' of their parents enhanced the context for successful language transmission.

When both parents were native Gaelic speakers, Gaelic was systematically transmitted. A successful intergenerational language transmission (good fluency according to the parents) was observed for each case.

In the households where there was only one native Gaelic-speaking parent, over a third of the children were transmitted Gaelic at home to some extent (in this case three out of eight

children). Successful language transmission occurred only when it was the mother (a quarter of the children in this household configuration); when it was the father, language transmission to a certain extent was observed, but it was weaker, as the child did not reach the fluency in Gaelic expected for his age.

In a few cases, a successful Gaelic transmission took place via the grandparents and this occurred when the only native Gaelic speaker was the father.

9.13.5.2 Children and language fluency

The next table analyses the level of fluency of the children at school entry after *Croileagan* (Gaelic nursery) according to their parents' speaking competence (both as stated by the respondents) and not their language background.

According to the parents' self evaluation, all of their children could speak Gaelic to some extent after two years at the Gaelic nursery¹³³ (see Table 50).

The children were more likely to have a good level of Gaelic ('Reasonably well' and above) when both their parents could speak Gaelic (five out seven children). This figure fell to two out of 12 when the children had only one Gaelic-speaking parent.

The most favorable conditions for language fluency were met when both parents were Gaelic speakers, probably as parents were more likely to use Gaelic within the home and provide speaking opportunities to the children.

Table 50: Levels of competence (1) of eldest child at school entry according to his parents' speaking competence in Gaelic (2) (N of parental households:22)

Levels of competence at school entry	Parents' households according to speaking competence in Gaelic:			N
	No Gaelic-speaking parents	One Gaelic-speaking parent	Two Gaelic-speaking parents	
No Gaelic	0	0	0	0
Few words & sentences	1	5	2	8
Restricted messages	2	5	0	7
Reasonably well	0	1	1	2
Nearly everything	0	1	4	5
Total	3	12	7	22

(1): During the interview, it was added "Gaelic competence corresponding to a satisfactory fluency relative to the age of the child".

(2): Each parent reporting to be able to speak Gaelic at the level 'Reasonably well' and above was considered a 'Gaelic-speaking parent'.

¹³³ All the children went to *Croileagan* apart from the four fully-fluent children. Their parents chose to send them to the English nursery "to establish their English".

9.13.6 Summary of intergenerational language transmission

This section showed that over a third of parents had Gaelic as their first language. The Gaelic thread across the generations was stronger on the paternal side. Fathers had a better fluency and they experienced a higher level of continuous language transmission with a high level of language reproduction.

In contrast, many mothers were further removed from Gaelic and some seemed closer to having completed a full language shift to English: only one fifth was native Gaelic-speaking. The majority of them came from the mainland with many still connected to the language through their Gaelic-speaking parents, although they were not native Gaelic speakers. These had a basic competence in Gaelic. This lack of Gaelic fluency impacted on the household's fluency as a whole and reduced the chance of a successful intergenerational language transmission to the children.

Nearly two thirds of the children with a native Gaelic-speaking background were directly transmitted the language. The chances of children being transmitted Gaelic at home were noticeably increased when both their parents were native Gaelic speakers with regard to transmission and its extent: all the children were confident in Gaelic when both parents were at least fairly fluent native Gaelic speakers as supposed to only a quarter of children who had only one fluent native Gaelic-speaking parent.

The next section will examine the family language practices in order to determine the extent of Gaelic use.

9.14 Language practices of the parents and the children

From the table below, it is clear that the majority of households (13) used English as their main language. Only a very small number of households designated Gaelic to be their main language at home, although another fifth (five) of responding families reported that Gaelic and English were both used. Therefore, Gaelic was used to some extent within a third of the households.

Table 51: Main language of the households (N of parental households:22)

Main language of the households	N
English	13
Gaelic	2
Mixture of both	5
Other	2
Total	22

A closer look at the data identified that in a total of six households, the two parents were fluent Gaelic speakers. However, in most of these households (four), the respondents replied that English was their main language. A possible reason for the use of English despite a high level of competence in Gaelic of the household could be the work-related absence of the fathers in these households, leaving their spouse as the only adult in the house.

Then again, it might be that language shift is happening within the households. A few respondents told me how their husband, despite his Gaelic fluency never spoke to their child(ren) through that medium: “My husband speaks it [Gaelic] perfectly, but he will never speak it to X...and never has done”.

Another woman reported a similar behaviour:

“My husband, although a native [Gaelic] speaker finds it hard to speak Gaelic to the children and for his parents, it’s the same...I have to keep at him to speak Gaelic”.

A third respondent felt disconcerted when faced by her husband’s lack of interaction in Gaelic with his children despite Gaelic being his native language:

“My husband’s attitude is bad; he won’t praise the language up although he speaks it as a normal language. It’s the first thing that comes to him, when people come to the house, but not with the children.”

So, it appeared that Gaelic was not frequently used as the main household language and it was particularly perplexing to see that some fluent fathers experienced some difficulties in communicating in Gaelic with their children. In a follow-up section, the language patterns of the respondents with their children will be analysed. The next section covers the respondents’ language practices through their various activities and the people they meet.

9.14.1 The respondents' language use

9.14.1.1 Language use at work meetings and for recreational pursuits

Gaelic is used for some activities or functions more than English (see Table 52). For instance, 10 responding households listened to Gaelic radio and 12 families watched TV programmes in Gaelic and English.

Both languages were also used for church functions and gatherings. During social occasions, like *ceilidhs*, many parents expected to use both languages. Some explained that the language they would use depended on the Gaelic fluency of the people attending the evening. This indicated a high level of bilingualism, with both languages used to include every participant.

However, as soon as it became work-related or reading, English only was used.

The table highlights the diglossic position of the Gaelic language within the community and the high level of bilingualism in *ceilidhs* or church aimed at including all the members of the community.

Table 52: Activities and language use (N of parental households:22)

Activities	Language(s) used by the parents				N
	English only	Gaelic only	Both languages	N/A	
Work meetings	21	1	0		22
Reading books	20	0	2		22
Reading newspapers	19	0	3		22
Church services, prayer groups	6	4	12		22
Concerts, <i>ceilidhs</i>	9	7	6		22
Listening to the radio	3	10	9		22
Watching television	7	2	12	1	22

9.14.1.2 Language use with close relatives, neighbours and teenagers

The figure below provides information on the language patterns of the respondents.

Throughout the graph, one can notice a progression from more Gaelic being spoken with the parents to hardly any spoken to younger folks.

On the graph, it is apparent that language patterns varied according to the interlocutor.¹³⁴

For instance, half of the respondents (11) used Gaelic to communicate with their own

¹³⁴ Many of the fluent Gaelic-speaking respondents found it difficult to give an exact answer as their use of Gaelic depended on the interlocutor's ability in Gaelic. The respondents, on my advice, gave their answer

parents, however this figure dropped to less than a fifth (four) when they spoke to teenagers – this aspect will be developed further below.

Looking at the graph, it is significant that for the nine respondents speaking Gaelic almost all the time to their parents, that language was not any longer the exclusive language they used with their siblings: six of these parents were using also English to some extent and similarly to communicate with their children. This shift shows the advance of English into the familial unit and this despite the occurrence of intergenerational language transmission.

It is even more striking to realize how Gaelic had lost ground to English when it came to close relationships with friends, with hardly any respondents using Gaelic more than English. Some seven respondents used both languages to the same extent with friends depending on whom their interlocutor was. Some reported that they spoke more Gaelic with certain people, whereas others said they code-switched between languages as a way of communicating.

When it came to speaking to neighbours, an even higher number of respondents, over two thirds (17) used predominantly English. Several parents remarked on incomers settling on the island. Many of these new residents came from the mainland, some with a non-Gaelic speaking background or with a 'different Gaelic'. The usual language to use when speaking to people that were not family members or with whom one had not grown up alongside was English; it was as if Gaelic was almost too intimate to share with strangers, beside the fact that a Gaelic speaker could not assume his neighbours to be able or to want to speak Gaelic.

The last variable in this graph relates to the language the respondents used when addressing teenagers. 18 parents spoke to teenagers using at least more English than Gaelic, with 14 using nearly exclusively English. This high number indicates a real shift from Gaelic to English with the adults recognizing that the language to use with teenagers had become English.

according to the language they were using the most across their relationships. The language pattern of one parent-respondent only within the household was analysed. When both parents were present during the interview, then the language pattern of the respondent the more at ease with Gaelic was analysed.

However, a few parents (four) did not go along with this situation as they continued to speak Gaelic to teenagers. A contributory factor explaining why these parents persevered with speaking Gaelic to teenagers was that their employment, and hence their socioeconomic status, involved the promotion of Gaelic – at least at some level or in some way. In such tight-knit communities, their occupations would be very widely known, and associated language behaviour and actions expected of them, over and above what might be the sociolinguistic dynamics of the surrounding society. So, even after work, in the eye of the community, these parents kept their status of ‘safeguarding’ Gaelic. It was expected of them to speak Gaelic and it was also a fact that these parents felt confident in their language and could tackle any subject through the medium of Gaelic.

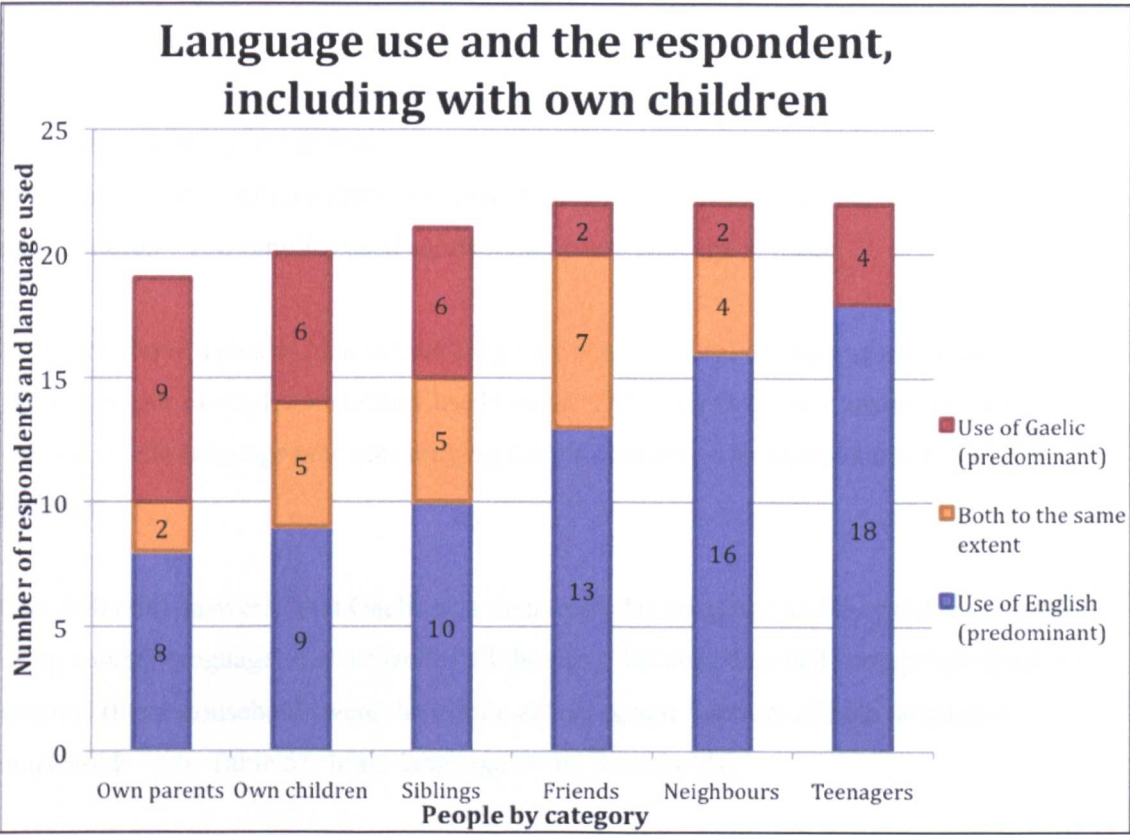


Figure 53: Language use and the respondents, including with own children (N of parent-respondents:22; N of responses:110)
(Where English did not apply, it was replaced by the appropriate language during the interview, but is counted as English here)

A supplementary question, part of question 53 concerning language use, was asked in order to gain an overview of the teenagers and the language they used when spoken to in

Gaelic. The table below shows that all but one of the respondents said that teenagers answered in English.

Table 53: Language choice and teenagers (N of parental households:22)

Language used to reply by teenagers	N
English	21
Gaelic	1
Total	22

The analysis therefore denotes a clear shift from Gaelic in favour of the use of English across all of the various groups of people and above all amongst the teen population. The fluent Gaelic-speaking respondents seemed especially to switch to English when they were with people outside the family circle and the younger generations. The next point will consider the language the families use with their own children.

9.14.1.3 Language use at home

Over three quarters of households (17) reported that they spoke Gaelic to some extent with their children – two families used another European language at home.

In order to have a clearer idea of their language practice, a follow-up question asked parents to give examples when they used Gaelic. The analysis of their answers revealed various Gaelic language practices ranging from a continuous to a ceremonial use of the language.

One fifth (six) answered that Gaelic was their everyday language and they did not consider using another language: it was Gaelic “all the time” because they had “competent speakers around” (these households were the Gaelic-speaking and ‘mixture of both languages’ households – see Table 51: Main language of the households).

For the remaining two thirds of the households (14), their Gaelic utterances seemed limited to “short sentences” (two of them), or “short commands” (eight of them), like “close the door”, “tidy your toys”. Some other examples given included greetings or set sentences (“how have you been today”) and prayers. Among these families, four mentioned that at times, they took the decision to speak Gaelic, although that decision was quickly reversed. Overall their use of Gaelic was essentially school-related.

The figure below confirms that except for the Gaelic-speaking or “mixture of both languages” households. Gaelic was used mainly during homework-time rather than as an everyday language to communicate. During that specific task, over half of the families (13) spoke at least more Gaelic than English, while six continued to interact mostly through English.

The aspect of Gaelic use relating specifically to school matters was reinforced by the answers concerning the language practice of the family in a leisure context. The balance between Gaelic and English use reverted to more English interactions; when the family shared time together, nearly two thirds (14) of households switched over to communicate predominantly through English and only the six aforementioned households continued using more Gaelic than English.

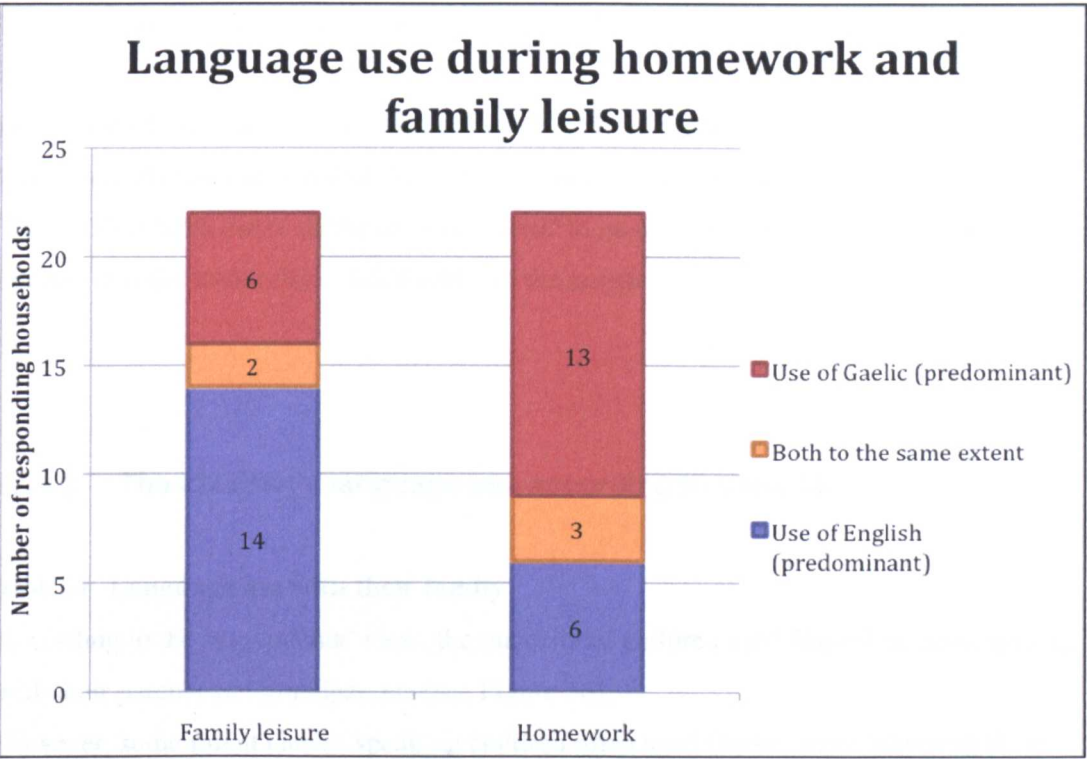


Figure 54: Language use during homework and family leisure (N of parental households:22)

So, the language patterns that existed within the family units prior to starting Gaelic-medium education did not appear to have affected the family language organization, although some degree of Gaelic had made its way into a few households, especially during

homework-time. (GME still reinforces the language and opportunity for fluency for the children who may be passive speakers at home).

This finding resonates with some of the comments of Gaelic teachers, who regretted the “lack of parental support” and the overstatement regarding the use of Gaelic at home. For them:

“The parents’ attitudes have to change; they think it is enough to send their children to Gaelic-medium, but it has to start at home. School is only for developing Gaelic fluency. You can’t expect them to go to school and learn Gaelic there”.

“Many parents exaggerate about the level of Gaelic they use at home...they should be more supportive”.

Another teacher said that many parents do not spend enough time or effort to help their children with Gaelic:

“Many parents think it is too much hard work after school; they don’t want to be bothered”.

One of the teachers interviewed thought that “[with] a few parents, the lost generation to Gaelic tries to catch up through their children, but that is not enough”.

The teachers were aware of the need for Gaelic to be used at home to communicate and interact in order to develop a full fluency in the language.

9.14.2 The children’s language use according to parents

9.14.2.1 Language use with their family

According to the respondents’ view, the majority of children used English to communicate with their parents and grandparents (see Figure 56).

However, some fluent Gaelic-speaking children often used Gaelic, especially with their older relatives: two out of five (nine) families reported that their children interacted through the medium of Gaelic with at least one set of grandparents (orange and red).

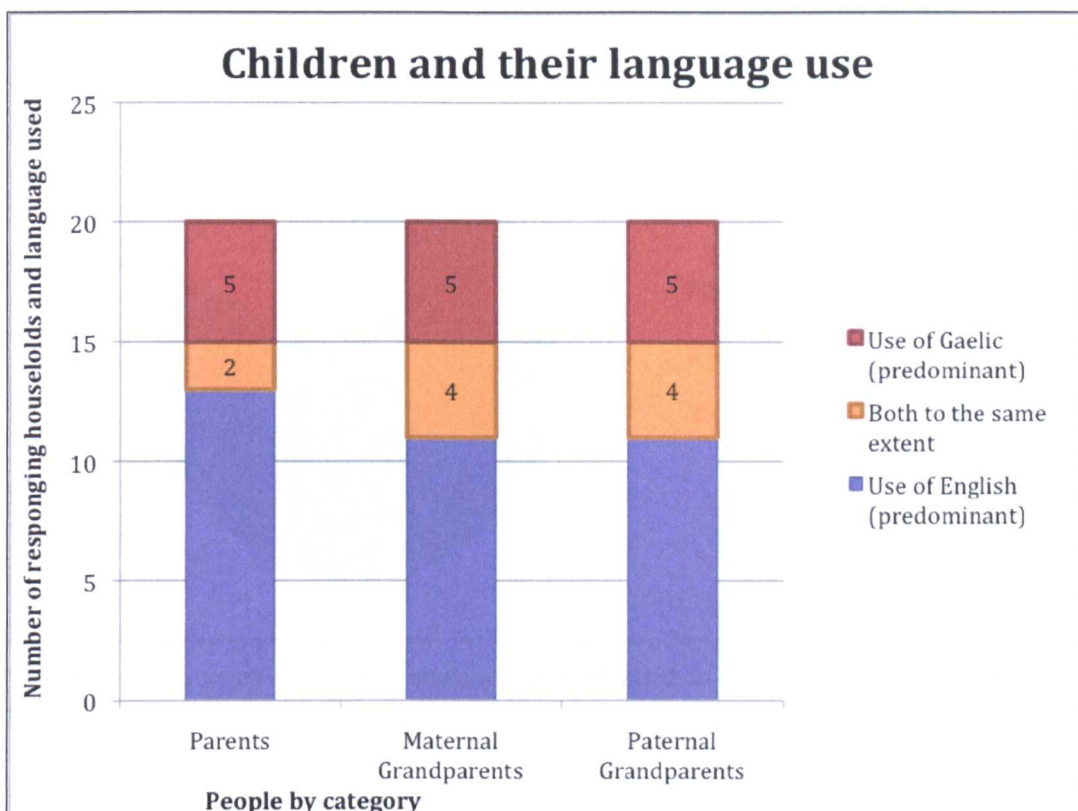


Figure 55: Children and their language use according to parents (N of parental households:22; N of responses:66)

Within these Gaelic-speaking families, children also used Gaelic as an everyday language with their parents, although within the family unit, the balance has shifted towards slightly more English.

The overwhelming majority of children (18) rarely started a conversation in Gaelic with their parents (see chart).

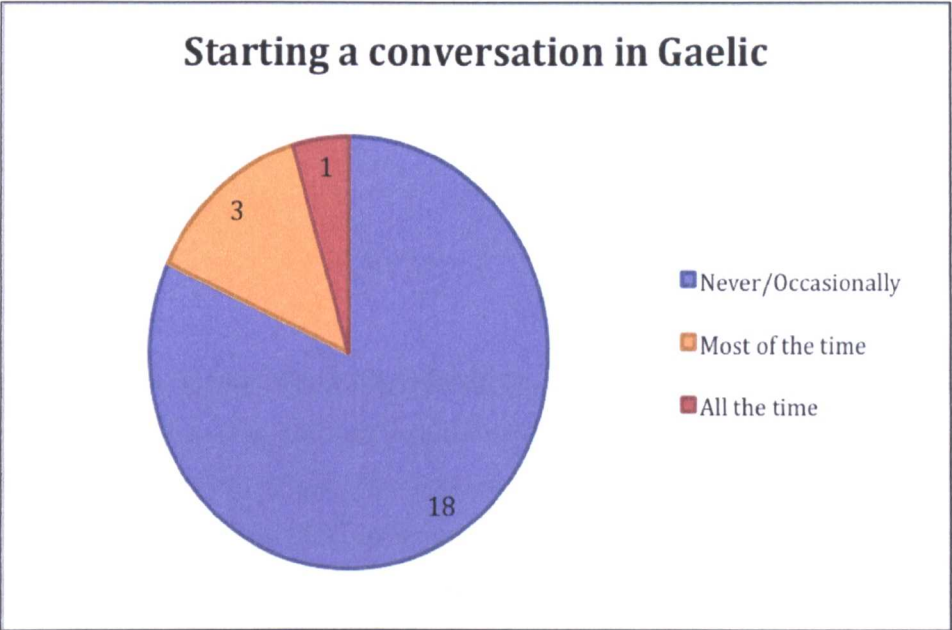


Figure 56: Frequency of children starting a conversation in Gaelic within their households (N of parental households:22)

On that topic, several parents confided that having their children answer in Gaelic was a real challenge:

“For parents, it is more difficult to praise the language up; most of their [children’s] friends speak English, they get the habit for it”.

“I would need to stand behind them, for them to speak Gaelic”.

“I have to nag him [my son] into it [Gaelic]”.

Another mother conveyed the ‘struggle’ to get her youngest child to reply in Gaelic:

“He is three and it is not possible to get a word of Gaelic out of him; I speak to him in Gaelic, he will answer in English. It is really sad when I do all what is possible, but English is all around”.

One parent referred to her children as “reluctant Gaelic speakers”.

According to a few respondents, Gaelic has also become a bargaining ‘weapon’:

“My children use Gaelic especially when they are after something”.

In fact, these were not isolated comments. The table below shows that two thirds (15) of households had children answering in English even when Gaelic was used by the parents. Only a very small number of parents said that their children answered naturally in Gaelic.

Table 54: Language children use to reply when spoken to in Gaelic (N of parental households:22)

Language used by children	N	%
English	15	68
Gaelic	2	9
Gaelic, when I ask them	5	23
Total	22	100

A respondent expressed how English had become the “normal”/everyday language to use: “I often use English myself and I am a Gaelic teacher. I should use more Gaelic, but it is English the language around the house, even in the staffroom”.

A respondent described the “intrusion” (as she interpreted it) of English into her home; English, which formerly had remained outside was brought inside through the medium of her older children and this established a pattern of language practices such as code-switching:

“The oldest bring English into the house [and as a result] their Gaelic is diluted”.

A parent commented on the way she resisted this “intrusion”, while she understood the reasons why many parents gave up:

“If they [children] come in speaking English, I tell them off in my own language; many parents go with the flow: it is the easiest option. I have to be strict and determined to make them speak Gaelic”.

Even such a rigorous discipline does not necessarily end up in a successful intergenerational language transmission. A crosstabulation showed that six parent-respondents from households with two fluent Gaelic-speakers noticed a drop in their children’s Gaelic competence when they compared the level of Gaelic of their first child at the GME start to the one of their following children. This weakening of Gaelic was only valid for some of the children that learnt Gaelic at home with parents having different levels of Gaelic or with parents not feeling secure in their Gaelic fluency.

9.14.2.2 With their own age group

Nearly all the families reported that their children used English almost all the time amongst siblings.

It is also clear that for all the children the everyday language to communicate with friends is English, even for the children brought up in the very small number of Gaelic-speaking families (see Figure 58).

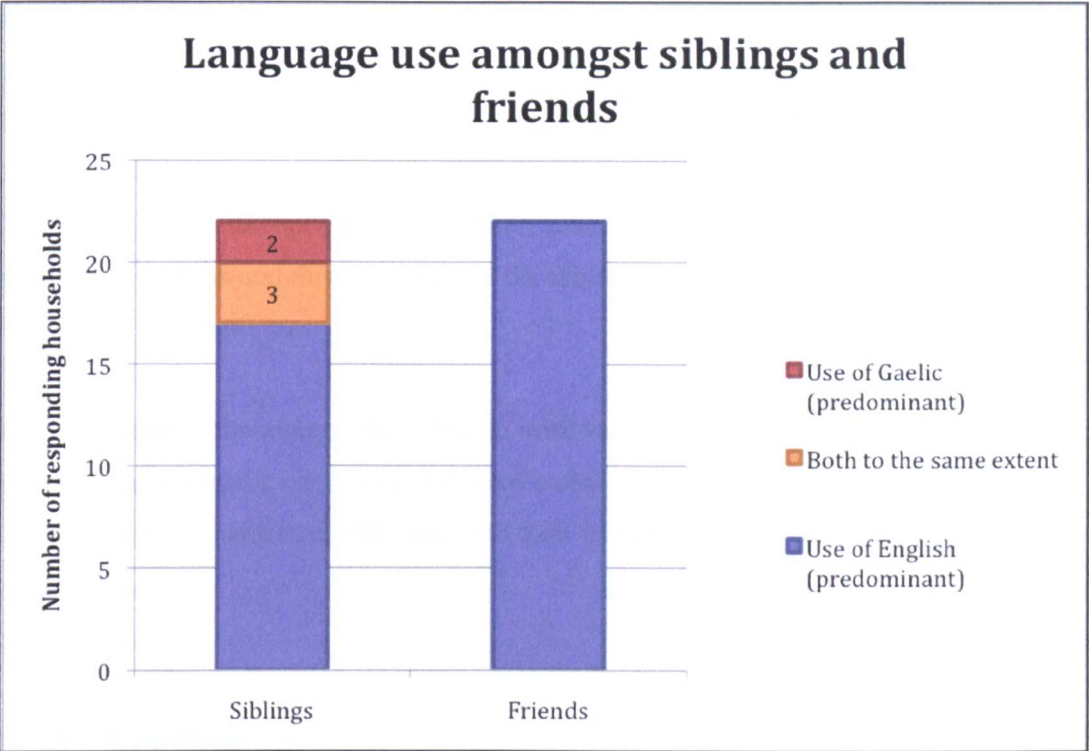


Figure 57: Language use amongst siblings and friends according to parents (N of parental households:22; N of responses:44)

All of the parents also believed that their children spoke mostly English, whilst children were participating in extracurricular activities.

Besides the average leisure activities common to most children (sports, music, etc.), some of the children attending the GMU participated in the Gaelic club (seven) and the Gaelic drama club (eight). When queried more specifically about the use of Gaelic: a third of these 15 parents believed their children used Gaelic (“it’s the rule”). Another third thought that it depended on the firmness of the teacher taking the activity, while the remaining respondents felt that even then, children continued to use English to interact (“children are not bothered with Gaelic”).

Through these three examples, contact between siblings, contact with friends and the extracurricular activities, the trend towards the use of English as an everyday language is confirmed.

9.14.3 Summarizing points

Gaelic was the main language of a very small number of households.

However, three quarters of the families used Gaelic to some extent. Even the parents with a limited fluency in Gaelic sought to use some Gaelic, especially during homework time.

This effort though did not extend into leisure time, as these were shared mostly through the medium of English and this was valid for the family as a whole and for children throughout their activities.

Children showed the weakest tie to Gaelic, with very few using it naturally: barely any spontaneously began a conversation in Gaelic and according to parents none of the fluent Gaelic-speaking children used Gaelic with their friends.

9.15 Conclusion

The analysis found that the majority of the Gaelic-medium parents were highly qualified and belonged to the highest occupational categories. They were all aware of the educational benefits of early bilingualism and many parents also saw this educational opportunity as the means to reinforce their children's Gaelic.

Three quarters of the respondents had at least one Gaelic-speaking parent; over a third of the parents had Gaelic as mother tongue, the proportion being higher for the fathers. The parents' level of competence in Gaelic was good especially in the oral skills, less so in the writing skills – a result which confirmed the diglossic position of Gaelic.

Two fifths of the children learnt Gaelic at home either with their parents or grandparents. Nearly two thirds of the children with a Gaelic language background were directly transmitted Gaelic. Intergenerational language reproduction was systematic with a high level of fluency where both parents were native Gaelic speakers.

The language practices of the families were varied; a quarter used Gaelic as an everyday language at home for socializing and leisure activities with their children, although Gaelic was reported to be the main language of a very small number of households. It was especially during homework-time that Gaelic was used by the most number of families (three quarters).

Parents fluent in Gaelic found it challenging to have their children communicate through the medium of Gaelic within the family unit. They noted that the language children predominantly used was English, even when they were addressed in Gaelic. The switch to English was especially flagrant with their own age group, particularly with their friends, as none of the children was reported to use Gaelic.

The context is one of erosion of Gaelic as the language of the home and of diminishing domains. Therefore, even if the parents were choosing the schools for better teaching and better educational approaches, there was still an input by the school in helping children to know more about the language and to have a better competence level in it. It is not an answer, but it does provide some support to the language; it adds to the skills; it links to heritage and parents are supportive of it (and want it). It is important though to point out that parents with a low socioeconomic profile, whether they had a Gaelic background or not, were underrepresented in the present sample.

10 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

So far, this thesis has considered the socioeconomic profile and motivations of parents who opted for minority language education together with their language background and patterns of language use in order to explore the following research questions:

- What factors influence the decision of parents who chose a minority language education for their children?
- How are these parents defined in sociodemographic and sociolinguistic terms?
- What do they seek for their children from a bilingual education?

The main analytic themes are:

- The high level of qualification of these parents.
- The parental expectations associated with their choice of a minority language education.
- The low level of the intergenerational transmission of the minority language.
- The overall basic level of skills of the parents in the minority language.
- The respondents' low interpersonal use of the minority language at community and household level.

In addition, two other themes inform the inquiry:

- How parental choices and expectations fit into the wider issues of language revitalization.
- How the findings from Brittany and the Western Isles (with their distinct sociolinguistic factors) contributed to understanding what was happening in each place; they illustrated language shift, the kinds of language changes taking place within families and the parental choice of medium schools within the context of language shift.

Issues concerning the above themes will be contextualized both relative to the gathered empirical data, to the research literature and its theoretical bases. The adoption of this dual-approach means that some studies will be referred to here for the first time.

10.1 Socioeconomic profile

The sample of parents for this inquiry contained a very high proportion of people belonging to the intermediate occupational category (Breton) and its equivalent professional category in the Western Isles, a number much higher than the surrounding population. Similarly, parents in both locations were highly qualified.

These findings match most of the work on occupational and educational status undertaken recently in Brittany and Scotland.

10.1.1 The Breton-medium parents

McDonald (1989), on Breton-medium parents some twenty years earlier found that “50% were in top white-collar and professional jobs...Most were teachers, or involved in social and medical services” (214). Her population of parents also uncovered farmers with an unusual university background, comparable to the current sample of parents. See also Humphreys (1991: 117) and more recent inquiries by INSEE (2003: 3) and by Guéguen (2006: 311-12). However, at least one author has disputed this (see Robin: 1999: 223¹³⁵).

Other researchers reported similar findings concerning educational levels. The TMO-1997 survey found that most Breton speakers were less likely to have followed a secondary education (Broudic, 1999). Broudic also contrasted this to Breton being especially valued and appreciated by the higher social strata of the population; see also Williamson *et al* (1983).

10.1.2 The Gaelic-medium parents

These findings were equally valid for the parents of Gaelic-medium children. Here too, recent enquiries found similar patterns. Stockdale *et al* (2003:30) found that a higher proportion than average of their respondents had a tertiary level qualification and many were employed below their qualification level. In an earlier inquiry, Johnstone *et al* (1999: 57) also reported the high socioeconomic status of Gaelic-medium parents; this was again highlighted in the 2001 Census (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005a).

¹³⁵ Robin did not provide percentages to back up his claim.

And this type of population is not representative of the profile of the majority of native Gaelic speakers. Three detailed inquiries showed an association between Gaelic, rurality and basic levels of qualification (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1961: 45; MacKinnon, 1977: 82 and 1996: 245 and 2000: 146; Dorian, 1981: 53).

These findings highlight a major issue associated with the uptake of minority language education, namely, the parent body is neither representative of the local community nor of most native speakers. The empirical data collected for this inquiry, besides noting the higher socioeconomic status of parents, examined other key factors of language, heritage and educational aspirations. These are discussed below.

10.2 Language transmission

The findings indicated that parents who had chosen a minority language education for their children were not necessarily transmitted the minority language, nor even connected to the language.

Among the Breton parents, hardly any had Breton as a first language even though over one third had at least one native Breton-speaking parent. These were aware of Breton being spoken during their childhood, but having had native Breton-speaking parents was insufficient to lead to successful language reproduction. Where some language transmission did occur, it often bypassed the parental generation, coming via their grandparents and the surrounding community; often, the transmission was basic. These language patterns were observed in central Brittany twenty years ago and were reported to lead rarely to Breton fluency of any sort (see Timm, 1980: 32.)

The intergenerational transmission of Breton had almost ceased in the 1950s, before the period during which the respondents had grown up. (See Le Dù, 1980; Williamson *et al*, 1983; Kuter, 1989; Favereau, 1993; Broudic, 1995). Cole and Williams (2004) in a meta-analysis of language use stated that “[a]lmost no-one under 40 today was born and brought up in a Breton-speaking household” (557) and the data obtained from this inquiry reflects this, with hardly any parent being able to speak Breton. Hardly any child could speak Breton before going to *Diwan* nursery and a substantial proportion going to *Diwan* schools

had no obvious family connection to Breton at all. Judge (2000: 57) also found a similar pattern. Some of the children in her study were at least two generations removed from an active Breton-speaking background; others had no apparent link to a Breton tradition.

The findings relating to Gaelic transmission indicated that over a third of parents had Gaelic as their first language. The level of intergenerational language reproduction of Gaelic as a first language was especially high on the fathers' side. All the fathers in the inquiry who had two Gaelic-speaking parents grew up on the island, surrounded by their extended family network and integrated in a Gaelic-language community. By contrast many of the mothers had been brought up on the mainland, with fewer experiencing intergenerational transmission.

Where intergenerational transmission was still in place, all the children with two fluent parents were successfully transmitted Gaelic. However, where there was only one fluent parent in the family, the strongest transmission was recorded when this parent was the mother (although transmission was not systematic). This observation on maternal transmission was also noted by Stockdale *et al* (2003)¹³⁶ and by the General Register Office for Scotland (2005a: 17).

When census data was considered for either parent for the Gaelic-speaking population as a whole, transmission figures were slightly lower than found in this inquiry: General Register Office for Scotland (2005a – table 26); see also MacKinnon (2006b: 3); for the Western Isles (see census 2001; McLeod, 2001: 3). The discrepancy is easily explained by the type of population interviewed for this inquiry, namely those who had chosen a GME for their children. Lamb (2001) reported a particularly alarming figure during the fieldwork he conducted in 1998 in the Western Isles (the Uists); out of a total population of over 6000, he only found 20 “Gaelic-speaking children between the ages of three and five” (10). Durckaz (1983: 216) and MacKinnon (2004b) referred to the three-generation language shift. This substantial intergenerational loss of Gaelic, especially in households with only one Gaelic speaker, was also found in this inquiry and found to be applicable even to households who chose GME.

¹³⁶ This percentage is in line with other studies relating to the Basque country. Oyharçabal, (1999: 46) found that when the mother alone was a native Basque speaker, 26% of children were transmitted Basque; in the same circumstances, but when it was the father, that figure fell to 15%.

To summarize, this section explained why hardly any Breton parents were transmitted Breton in contrast to the Gaelic-medium parents, over a third of whom still had Gaelic as their first language. However, the analysis of Gaelic transmission across three generations indicated substantial intergenerational loss of the language. Gaelic transmission to the GM children was only systematic as long as both parents were native Gaelic speakers. Language reproduction might go on falling with the decrease in Gaelic-speaking households (both parents), which provide the best conditions for successful language transmission.

The potential implications of this, specifically for language transmission, were explored with the parents. But it was not their main concern, not their leading factor, in terms of their expectations from minority language schooling. However, what it does highlight are the complex issues associated with positioning minority language education in the corpus of minority language planning.

10.3 Language competence

In Brittany, the lack of direct intergenerational language transmission combined with a majority of parents unconnected to Breton had a bearing on the parents' fluency in the language. The overwhelming majority of the Breton parents had a poor level of competence in Breton. This corresponds to McDonald's (1989: 197) and Guéguen's (2006: 313) findings. Their poor level of oral skills was unsurprising as hardly any parents were transmitted Breton in childhood. At best, these were semi-speakers. For Broudic (1995: 348), these passive Breton semi-speakers had only a residual knowledge of the language, which disqualified them from presenting a serious basis for Breton language maintenance.

A poor level of competence was not found among the Gaelic-medium parent population; around two thirds had good understanding and speaking skills. It was especially true for the fathers. However, wide variations in levels of fluency were observed, despite geographical stability. This continuum was also found in some parents with a background of language transmission uninterrupted until their generation, indicating the progression of language shift.

This wide range of language fluency was found in both areas among the parents connected through their background to the minority language. In Brittany most of these parents occupied the least proficient side of the tables, representing a poor level of fluency. In the Western Isles, the parents' fluency was spread over the most able side of the tables (see findings and the dividing emboldened line in Tables 23 and 24). Even so, this spread within the levels of fluency reported in Gaelic indicated a decline in the number of confident speakers.

This spread-out pattern of language-competence, especially noted with Breton, indicated a language shift close to the point where language transmission was no longer occurring via natural channels of transmission (family and community). This stage corresponded to Mesthrie and Leap's (2000) description: "[s]peakers of a language that is in its last stages [before extinction] may exhibit a range of competence in the outgoing language from full command to zero" (259); (see also McMahon, 1994: 291; Kenny, 1996: 1).

Another significant point found in this inquiry and common to many language shift situations was that a higher proportion of fathers than mothers had better oral skills in both areas. Broudic (1995) commented that males continued to use Breton for longer, for the purposes of socializing, while females embraced French much faster as a means to escape the traditional society and its constraints (427-29).¹³⁷ This tendency was also highlighted by MacKinnon for the Gaelic language (1977: 162-3; 1994: 126). The slightly higher level of fluency in the fathers' population was also due to more fathers having a connection with the Breton and the Gaelic language through their family.

In addition, according to McDonald (1994), Breton fathers had better language skills because there were "very many more men than women in the Breton movement" (102), although in this study, there did not appear to be a high proportion of activists (see below).

Language competence was however not the main issue. Parents (both Breton and Gaelic) were not necessarily expecting their choice of schooling to re-establish or strengthen full intergenerational transmission. Nevertheless, the findings in the Western Isles suggested that the transmission factors still in place could be better utilized, both by an education system and a parental language community. In both communities, the findings highlighted some acknowledgment that the "learnt" language would be just that (as distinct from the

¹³⁷ This is also found in Timm's (1980) work. Labov (1972) claimed that aspiring middle-class women were more active in initiating linguistic or language change and tended to imitate middle-class speakers.

quality of a transmitted language). Fathers (or the older generation) fluent in Gaelic felt more confident speaking the majority language with their children. Fathers represent a linguistic resource which could be exploited to support and develop their children's confidence in the language.

Paradoxically, it was almost always the mothers who helped with the homework, despite their language skills being weaker. This tallied with the traditional role of mothers, who usually follow their children's progress at school. This finding compared with Maguire's (1991: 101) inquiry into Irish parents where she also noted the educational role of the mother in helping with homework.

10.4 Learners and difficulties in using the language

10.4.1 Learners' competence

The majority of respondents (over half of the Breton-medium parents and a quarter of the Gaelic-medium parents) had taken lessons in the minority language, although few had progressed beyond a basic level of competence. This was especially true for the learners without a minority language background.

Learning a second language (or reactivating a forgotten language) represents a big commitment and many learners, as with most of the parents, seldom reach a high level of competence (see McLeod (2001: 19) and MacCaluim (2007: 231)).¹³⁸

This was also found for the Breton-medium parents by McDonald (1989; 1994: 101), who came across parents who "did not relish the extra-work of Breton-learning" (1989: 208).

In this study, many respondents felt they knew enough Breton to oversee their children's homework. Others commented that their children were way ahead of them with their Breton-learning. In both locations, very few parents planned to further improve their language skills. This observation is again in line with Maguire's (1991) inquiry: "once children start at school, parents tend to acquire just enough familiarity with the language to keep abreast of their children – at least during the first three or four years" (111).

¹³⁸ Oyharçabal (1999: 44) also noted this difficulty for Basque learners.

10.4.2 Learners' difficulties

Adult learners felt discouraged, owing to their difficulty in using the minority language outside the learning context. This view was shared by learners in both locations and this topic will be developed below, beginning with the Breton parents.

The effort parents had made to learn some Breton did not result in greater use of the language outside of the course, unless they had an intergenerational link with Breton through their own parents. Even then, its use remained basic. Gaining access to community-formed networks is very difficult if not impossible (see McDonald (1994: 104), Timm (2003: 11) and Chapter Four).

Parents felt part of the school and the Breton revival movement, but their Breton-learning appeared to occur in isolation from the native speakers with no interpersonal social use of the language. There was no integration of new speakers into the long-established networks of first language speakers. Most of the learners did not belong or did not have access to the same social networks as the traditional Breton speakers. Native Breton speakers are mainly elderly rural or fishing people, living a traditional way of life, whereas the respondents were highly qualified with, for the majority, no link to the language within their family. "The bottom line is that younger, urbanized standard speakers often have little in common with older, less formally-educated rural native speakers" (German, 2007: 153). (See also McDonald, 1989; Kuter, 1989; Broudic, 1995; M.C. Jones, 1995; Timm, 1980, 2003; Cole and Williams, 2004; Le Dù, 2009.)

Many first language speakers still cannot understand why someone would learn Breton (Pentecouteau, 2002). For example, in this study, a couple of parent-learners avoided the use of Breton with their native Breton-speaking neighbours so as not to be seen as odd. Similarly, during her fieldwork, McDonald (1989) had become "a phenomenon" (170) simply because she had learnt Breton. Despite the improvement in the status of Breton commented on by all the parents, its diglossic position is still embedded within the social and symbolic construction of the remaining first language speakers.

The parents also noticed that many first language speakers had stopped speaking Breton even amongst one another and used it naturally only with the people alongside whom they

had grown up. This was also noted by Humphreys (1991): “[n]ot only do Breton speakers generally use French with strangers who may well themselves be Breton speakers, but many also use French with people they know to speak a Breton similar to their own” (115).¹³⁹

In fact, during their adulthood, many native Breton speakers experienced deep socio-cultural, economic and structural changes, which impacted on their own sociolinguistic patterns. Their language use evolved more towards French, in line with their surroundings and it meant that they established new relationships through the medium of French. They often used French with people they encountered later in life, even with other native Breton speakers. They would only revert to Breton when they met up with those childhood friends who belonged to their early social network.

Once a bond has begun in one language, it is difficult to switch languages; for instance, in a family, it might be perceived as a request to renegotiate the basis of the relationship (Pentecouteau, 2002: 210-1). In this inquiry, virtually all the respondents with a Breton background brought up the refusal and/or the impossibility of their native Breton-speaking parents to communicate with their grandchildren through the medium of Breton. A reversal of language implies a renegotiation of the family rapports and it also contravenes the current social conventions of language use, that is to say, the everyday language is French. The situation was mirrored for Gaelic with fathers and their children.

In addition, the level of fluency in Breton was basic, impeding the flow of exchanges.¹⁴⁰ On top of this, many respondents were aware of the issue surrounding the standardization of Breton. They knew that most native speakers did not feel comfortable with the taught Breton standard. Not only do they perceive their own variety to be “*du mauvais Breton*” (bad Breton) (M.C. Jones, 1995: 430; Wmffre, 2004: 168), but they also feel that it sounds too remote from their own local vernacular;¹⁴¹ it “might as well be French for all the

¹³⁹ NicAoidh (2006) also noticed that some of her “respondents often use English even when they know it is possible to use Gaelic” (85).

¹⁴⁰ See Pentecouteau (2002: 211) and Wmffre (2006), for whom native speakers “are certainly not paid to be patient language teachers” (243).

¹⁴¹ This situation occurs frequently with a minority language in a diglossic position versus the taught standardized version (see Jaffe, 1999: 276 for an informative and entertaining account about Corsican).

relation it bears to their own ‘real’ Breton” (Kuter, 1989: 85)¹⁴². Although, German (2007) found that “native speakers tend to exaggerate problems of intercomprehension between dialect areas” (153).¹⁴³

Learners are interested in seeing the use of Breton extended to institutional levels, while the native rural speakers, although not necessarily against its use, do not value Breton as a useful language. Moreover, they would certainly not consider using it outside their close network of friends. Broudic (1995) speaks of “not only a hiatus, but a real fracture, between the Breton revival movement and the whole of the Breton population”¹⁴⁴ (*my translation* 335).

Native speakers and learners, coming from opposite ends of the social spectrum, have little in common and thus have different positioning and perspectives on the Breton language. This is why for learners, “it is socially and linguistically ‘easier’ to speak with another learner rather than a native Breton speaker”¹⁴⁵ (*my translation* Pentecouteau, 2002: 213). As a result, there is very little intercommunication in Breton between learners and native speakers; they exist as separate groups, holding different views on Breton (Pentecouteau, 2002: 123), a situation clearly shown in this study.

For Gaelic, the situation was broadly similar, although less pronounced. It is true that the dialectal variations from the taught standard are relatively minor¹⁴⁶ (Morgan, 2000: 130), although even slight differences might still be perceived as “sociolinguistic barriers” (Grillo, 1989: 200). Indeed, over a quarter of the Gaelic-medium parents raised the debate over which Gaelic was the authentic one (the standardized variety was seen as the “real Gaelic”, not the local variety). Some parents felt that the standard “created confusion” in

¹⁴² No native speakers were involved into the standardization process. Ten years after his first comment, Kuter (1999) changed his view on *Néo-breton*: “[c]hildren are able to communicate naturally with each other and anyone in their community using Breton” (180).

¹⁴³ This attitude has also been noted by King (2000): “speakers of threatened languages often tend to accentuate the differences between their variety and another” (117).

¹⁴⁴ “non seulement un hiatus, mais une véritable fracture, entre le mouvement breton et la population bretonne prise dans son ensemble”.

¹⁴⁵ “il est plus ‘facile’ socialement et du point de vue de la connaissance de la langue de parler avec une personne qui a également appris le Breton plutôt qu’avec un Bretonnant de naissance”.

This is also reported by Löffler (2000: 515, 520) for Welsh learners and by Kabel (2000: 136) for Irish learners.

¹⁴⁶ This is not valid for East Sutherland Gaelic (Dorian, (1978: 26-8; 1981: 88-9). Ennew (1980) commented on the “wide variety of Gaelic spoken in home and village life in rural areas” (107). For more detail and different viewpoints on the extent of dialectal variations, see McEwan-Fujita (1997: 9) and Lamb (2001: 7-8).

children, even if their children's aptitude for writing in Gaelic "impressed" a few of the parents who were native speakers. These comments highlighted the diglossic position of Gaelic within the community while underlying the implications of becoming fully fluent (low and high registers) in a language that "is today most often the medium of a narrow band of registers" (Lamb, 2001: 13).

This diglossic situation was also believed to be receding, a point which will be developed in the next section. This shift towards a more general use of English resulted in the inability of the community to transform new residents into Gaelic speakers through the natural process of immersion. This was reported by NicAoidh (2006) for whom islanders were aware that "English [had]...become the predominant community language in the Western Isles" (85). Other respondents in this study indicated that most couples under the age of 30 spoke English, a finding suggesting that most families within the reproductive age-range might not raise their child(ren) with Gaelic; a point also noted by MacKinnon (1994: 126).

As Gaelic use decreased within the community, the balance towards more English use was reinforced at every operational level. Such a change was also highlighted by Lamb (2001): "[s]peakers less than forty years old may be functionally fluent in Gaelic, but dominant in English" (12). This retreat of Gaelic from community level meant that parents and their children learning the language were never addressed in Gaelic by first language speakers, as they lacked the access to family networks where Gaelic has withdrawn.

Another point highlighted by over a quarter of the respondents was the division between the islands and the mainland. They believed that people in Glasgow or Edinburgh were more committed to Gaelic. Their conviction was so strong that for them any revitalization would most likely occur in urban Lowlands whereas Gaelic would continue to decline in the islands. These differing viewpoints regarding the value of the language and the revitalization effort for Gaelic have also been noted by S. MacDonald (1997: 241; 218);¹⁴⁷ she found that learners, activists or/and native speakers often held different positions (see also MacCaluim, 2007), although McLeod (2001: 20) warned against overstating this artificial division.

¹⁴⁷ This aspect was also reported by Hickey (1997): "[m]any native-Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht do not see the value of pre-school education and do not send their children to naíonraí" (55).

This section highlighted the basic level of competence in the minority language of most parent learners even after having participated in courses. It also provided some exploratory pointers explaining why learners might experience some difficulties in penetrating networks of first language speakers and switching language within established relationships. It showed the importance of embedding the school and the language classes for learners within the surrounding community by teaching the local variety of Gaelic and by including first language speakers. These links would reinforce the image of Gaelic as an everyday language of communication and may help with the integration of learners.

10.5 Parents, children and their pattern of language use

The description of minority language use by the parents and their children was considered fundamental in order to explore the revitalizing impact of a minority language education.

10.5.1 Breton

Breton was marginally used by 21% of families, mainly during homework. This figure was consistent with other estimates. Kuter (1999: 180) reckoned that 20% of children were brought up in Breton-speaking homes, a figure slightly lower than *Diwan*'s own figure of 30% (see *Diwan Breizh*, 2001a).

It is crucial to investigate thoroughly what these figures really mean in term of language use. First of all, in this inquiry, the main language within all the households was French, a finding echoed by McDonald's (1989: 197) and Broudic (1995: 387). Where Breton was used, it was mostly limited to the reception of the language (i.e. listening to the radio). The active use of the language was rare. When it occurred, it mainly consisted of set phrases and short instructions, which did not engage the two parties in meaningful exchanges.

According to parents, children hardly used Breton outside the classroom, even with their classmates. Being fluent in the standardized variety of Breton did not seem to encourage them to use that language as their everyday language. Understandably, nearly all the Breton-medium children had learnt Breton at school, that is, by a process of school

acquisition, which is quite different from learning Breton through intergenerational transmission or community interactions.

Children did not use Breton as a vernacular to speak to the native Breton speakers around them, for example their grandparents. For Tabouret-Keller (1999: 110), the relationship a child builds with his minority language-speaking grandparents is a determining factor of language maintenance. A few mothers also reported that their children refused to communicate in Breton and that their children felt they were learning the language on the parents' behalf to please them.

The fantasy of the immersion experience was noted by Guéguen (2006); she noticed that as soon as the *Diwan* children “are out of the hearing-range of teachers, they play and speak in French”¹⁴⁸ (427). McDonald (1989) described the artificiality of the Breton revitalization effort in school when she mentioned that the “spontaneity” (201) of the children remained French or when she reported some of the comments made by Breton teachers: “Breton is not a natural language for the children, is it? They are playing a role, it’s all make-believe” (199), (see also Le Berre and Le Dû, 1999: 82).

All of these factors indicated a point of no return for the language as a traditional continuing heritage transmitted orally and the impossibility to “repair the break in the chain of generations” (McDonald, 1994: 101).

10.5.2 Gaelic

The situation with Gaelic was different as many Gaelic-medium parents knew Gaelic. However, it was mainly used for oral activities and those parents fluent in Gaelic switched language depending on the language competence of their interlocutor and the context (for a similar account, see Lamb, 2001: 14). Hardly any parents read books or newspapers in Gaelic or used it in formal domains (see also MacKinnon, 1993: 513-4). This strongly highlighted the diglossic position of Gaelic, used within close social networks.

In fact, in this study, the majority of the households indicated that English was their main language; less than one in ten households nearly always used Gaelic and close to a quarter

¹⁴⁸ “ne sont plus à la portée de l’oreille de l’adulte, jouent et s’entretiennent entre-eux en français”.

tended to codeswitch between Gaelic and English. These figures were in line with those found by S.MacDonald (1997: 222), Morrison (2004: 76) and Müller (2006: 125).

The amount of Gaelic still in use within the family circle was found to be receding across the generations and between siblings, and was further diminished when there were no family connections such as friends and neighbours. MacKinnon (1994: 129) reported a comparable declining interpersonal use of Gaelic (see also Western Isles Language Plan Project, 2005: 21). However, he found a greater use of Gaelic with neighbours (see Euromosaic, 1995 – Figure 14: ‘Language used in social relationships’). The lower figure found in this inquiry might indicate a further retreat of Gaelic from the community over a ten-year time span.

For those children with a Gaelic background, usage was more frequent with their parents and especially their grandparents, where both parents were native Gaelic speakers, although interaction through Gaelic was not observed among children when they were not related (see also Morrison, 2004: 114, 182; 2006: 150). Even so, hardly any children started a conversation in Gaelic with their parents. Some parents believed their children saw Gaelic as a school language. This association of Gaelic with school-based activities or only as a school subject was also observed by MacNeil and Stradling (2000: 8; 26), by Morrison (2004: 178, 182) and it meant that Gaelic was seldom used as a vernacular (Morrison, 2004: 182; 2006: 147; 150; Müller, 2006: 125-129; NicAoidh, 2006: 85).

The low level of interpersonal use of Gaelic found in this inquiry contradicted Cochran’s (2008) findings. She claimed that “95% of [Gaelic-medium] pupils¹⁴⁹ speak at least some Gaelic in the home. 72% of pupils have local family or friends with whom they can speak Gaelic...These high levels of social language use are encouraging in that they create a network of Gaelic speakers” (187-8). In fact, the current inquiry highlighted that even if a GME consolidated and improved Gaelic fluency, most Gaelic-medium children did not actively use their Gaelic language skills. This was also the case for some children with a Gaelic-speaking background, despite their family networks providing Gaelic-speaking opportunities. Pollock (2007: 178) reported similar situations with families being able to speak Gaelic, but who did not actually do so. The cause of this decline is not to be attributed to children alone; other studies have found that even when young Gaelic

¹⁴⁹ Her fieldwork was across several locations in Scotland, not necessarily core Gaelic-speaking areas.

speakers made an effort to speak Gaelic, they were not always accommodated by older speakers who switched to English (MacNeil and Stradling, 2000: 18-9; Smith-Christmas and Smakman, 2009).

From these findings, one can conclude that there is a clear shift from Gaelic to English as the vernacular language across the island community. The use of Gaelic among children was stronger when language continuity was embedded within the family and when the language had remained a medium of interaction within the household.

The situations of Gaelic and Breton were different, although at their core not dissimilar. More Gaelic-medium parents could speak Gaelic or were directly linked to Gaelic, but in most households, it was not used as the main language and indeed was receding.

In addition, a similar trend emerged in both locations as children seemed to associate the minority language mainly with school-related activities and tended to use the language for interpersonal communication only on rare occasions. It was used as a vernacular only by a small number of children with a very strong family background in the language.

The lack of social interactions through the medium of the minority language underlines the changes from an established functional diglossia or collective bilingualism to individual bilingualism. Even though children have become acquainted with the standardized variety, they do not seem to internalize the minority language as a vernacular alongside English or French, which has come to occupy that position even for the children with a strong, continuing and supportive minority background. Therefore, the children, the school and the community are not functioning in an interdependent relationship centred around language revitalization, contrary to the expectations of language planners.

10.6 Three parental discourses: parental expectations associated with choice of schooling

The findings reported in Chapter Nine indicated a low level of competence in the minority language for parents, especially in the case of Breton. At the same time, almost all the reasons suggested by the parents for choosing a minority language education were

associated with language; 95% of the Breton-medium parents gave at least one language-related reason associated with bilingualism.

One of the challenges of this inquiry lays in unravelling what was the most important for the parents: the minority language *per se* or the skill of bilingualism with its associated advantages. In response to a direct question, all the parents claimed that it was important for their children to have the language. However in open-ended questions, they seldom referred to the minority language as having been a priority for their choice of school. This was especially the case for the Breton parents.

When the language was mentioned, in most instances it was in connection with vague notions of supporting Breton as a cultural or heritage feature. In very few instances it was linked to a communicative reason. In a similar vein, most of the Gaelic-medium parents were attracted by bilingualism for their children, to which they attributed educational benefits and saw the additional advantage of broadening their children's cultural horizons. At the same time, many Gaelic-medium parents (nearly a third) stressed their responsibility to save Gaelic or to reinforce their children's family language. Clearly, some parents had purposely chosen a Gaelic education for their children with a view to language continuity. For others, any two languages, such as French and English, would have served equally well. This was openly discussed by the majority of the Breton-medium parents.

The Breton respondents provided three discourses, not necessarily exclusive of each other and even merging into one another: the Breton discourse, the antiglobalization discourse and the educational discourse. This subdivision did not strictly apply to the Gaelic parents because GME is fully state-integrated and must follow the strict curricular guidelines established by the Scottish government. However, some parts of these discourses were found in both areas.

10.6.1 The minority language discourse

Over half of the Breton parents linked their choice of school to their own Breton-speaking background (parents and especially grandparents). They often mentioned the fact that Breton was not transmitted to them because the state had disavowed Breton. The loss of the family language visibly affected some parents, especially when it was recent. In these cases, this sense of loss directly applied to them, the generation without Breton, the

generation with something missing from their childhood heritage. This emotional suffering led them towards Breton at first for themselves and then for their children, perhaps as a way to restore the symbolic image of themselves and of their family across the generations. This is what Pentecouteau (2002) called “the healing process following the loss of a language”¹⁵⁰ (*my translation* 108). Breton is symbolically linked to their family history and even to the memory of the people they heard speaking Breton. This third generation return, as already mentioned in the theoretical section of this study (5.3.2: ‘Dealing with the loss of a language’), can explain in part the emotional tie a few parents had towards the Breton language while undergoing a kind of grieving process.

This point also suggested that a continuing attachment to the language could shift into fanatical activism. Among the respondents, the presence of Breton activists was minimal, illustrated by the low number of parents mentioning Breton as their main reason for choosing the medium school. In fact, many parents were worried about the amount of Breton their children would be exposed to: “will my child not do too much Breton?” To this question, the *Diwan* website (*Diwan Breizh*, 2001a) sought to reassure parents by calculating that “only 25 to 30 % of the child’s active [teaching] time would be through Breton”¹⁵¹ (the rest of the time with family, friends... was believed to be through French).

The Gaelic-medium parents also offered the Gaelic discourse without the activist element found in Brittany. More parents were directly linked to Gaelic through their background, even if they did not speak Gaelic at home; they believed that such an education would act as a transmission channel for their children or for those who used some Gaelic with their children. The school would establish and reinforce their children’s fluency in the language and help the revitalization of Gaelic.

10.6.2 The anti-globalization discourse

In Brittany, another type of respondent included the culturally-aware parents, in search of cultural roots, a heritage and respect for all minorities in general. They saw Breton as an integral part of a rounded education offering a cultural dimension to their children and opening their outlook towards other cultures. These aspects also appealed to the Gaelic-

¹⁵⁰ “démarche de réparation vis-à-vis d’une langue perdue”.

¹⁵¹ “Mon enfant ne va-t-il pas faire trop de breton? Comptons ensemble sur une semaine : 7 jours de 24h soit 168h dont 70 de sommeil, restent 98 heures. 26h d’école (en breton mais avec du français en primaire), 72h famille, amis, etc. (en français très souvent). Soit 25 à 30% seulement de la vie éveillée en Breton”.

medium parents, especially to the parents without a Gaelic language background. The choice of school also represented a cultural choice, which they believed would develop the cultural awareness of their children and often create an identity with a sense of heritage in their community linking with the “ancestors” – equivalent to the “Granny syndrome”.¹⁵²

It is important to realize that for many Breton-medium parents, their selection of school went beyond a cultural choice. It provided them with a platform for their political and multicultural stance. It symbolized their opposition to the French state and its perceived levelling, unfair and imposed rules – the French school system is often viewed like a “steamroller” (Calvet). These are exactly the themes on which the *Diwan* charter focuses (*Diwan Breizh*, 2001d): articles six, seven and eight are against linguistic and cultural uniformity; they stand for the right for diversity and express solidarity with peoples struggling to have their cultural identity respected¹⁵³ (see Appendix E: Charter Diwan).

As it happens, Breton has come to represent “a symbol of the persistence of a ‘small’ people against all odds in a world which seems to favour ‘big’ peoples and cultural standardization” (Kuter, 1989: 88). For many parents, the underlying issues regarding their preference for a Breton-medium school indicate an alignment with the underdogs – the ‘minorized’ culture.¹⁵⁴ It represented a choice for freedom and for greater cultural equality.¹⁵⁵ This perception was reinforced by the fact that the Breton-medium schools followed the main principles of Freinet pedagogy¹⁵⁶ (see footnote 114) with its autonomy, inquiry-based learning and child-centred approach. It was an essential criterion for the parents that their children should thrive within their school environment and many parents praised the all-inclusive approach of the learning experience.

¹⁵² Expression coined by Meek ([2000] cited in McLeod, 2001: 11) for Scottish people who ‘conveniently’ succeed in tracing a Gaelic-speaking relative, “somewhere in the family tree”.

¹⁵³ In Brittany, many people believe that the French state wiped out Breton. Many authors (Per Denez, 1988: 132; Breton, 1999: 90; Rogers and McLeod, 2006; Judge, 2007) still relay the *Jacobin* ploy as the main factor in the Breton decline.

¹⁵⁴ *Diwan* “was revolutionary in its ideology...with echoes of neo-marxian, national liberation ideas...a process whereby, ‘the people themselves take control of the schooling of their children in the language which is their own, even though, or perhaps because, it is already in a drastic situation...the militants, therefore, [saw themselves] as a champion of the aspirations of ‘a population for so long accustomed to living in a position of dependency and submission, confronted with cultural values imposed from above’” (Vaughan, 1996: 554-5).

¹⁵⁵ Pentecouteau (2002) has described this phenomenon with the Breton learners, who are seeking to belong to an ‘authentic’ culture, which has been completely recreated, though they consider it to be the real Breton culture.

¹⁵⁶ The *Diwan* charter never explicitly refers to that pedagogy, although it guarantees the child-centred teaching to be based around the child’s observations, his life environment, etc. (*Diwan Breizh*, 2001c).

For these parents, the teaching respected the children's individuality, helping children to learn in a conducive, playful and effortless manner¹⁵⁷ and for these reasons, parents considered it far better than the teaching in mainstream schools which they saw as conventional with coercive methods.¹⁵⁸ The innovative approach to teaching in the Breton-medium schools corresponded to the parental aspirations. Moreover, small class-sizes were believed to improve the teaching standards. Gaelic-medium parents also favoured small class-sizes.

Another point highlighted by nearly three quarters of the Breton parents was their involvement with the running of the school by organizing events; this enabled them to establish close contact with the teachers and contributed to creating a pleasant family atmosphere within the school.

This different outlook on education satisfied many parents seeking a political and social alternative. For "[m]ost of these parents [who] did not know Breton...free play and no 'imposition' was 'Breton' enough" (McDonald, 1989: 197).

10.6.3 The educational discourse

This third discourse was prominent in the answers given by parents; it focused on educational attainments through the skill of bilingualism. Analysis of both the Breton and Gaelic studies clearly showed that bilingualism was, in the parents' opinion, unquestionably linked to educational advantages such as enhanced intellectual abilities, a rounded education and the instilling of confidence (see point: 5.1.4.2, 'The benefits for the children'). These factors were found to be the largest cluster of answers provided by parents having chosen a GME in a study conducted by Johnstone *et al* (1999: 62-3); they were also highlighted by Cochran (2008: 240) and by O'Hanlon *et al* (2010).

Most parents were *au fait* with educational methods and recent research. Even when asked about other aspects of the language, parents generally returned to the educational benefits

¹⁵⁷ "Through play, songs and activities, the young child learns, effortlessly, whatever his mother tongue is" (*Diwan Breizh*, 2001d).

¹⁵⁸ McDonald (1989) mentioned that the Breton-medium schools "recruited the overflow from local Freinet or Montessori schools" (214).

their children were gaining from a bilingual education. It became clear that learning a second language with its associated benefits was the main attraction.

This is an understandable motive for parents. It is also appropriate and consistent with the role of schools, which is to deliver a good education. This interest of parents in early bilingualism “whatever the language” (Judge, 2000: 58) might not have been foreseen by language planners. However, one could argue that this principal educational motivation could also be compatible with the state’s endeavour to revitalize a minority language, although revitalization was not the primary concern of most parents. In both areas, the same pattern of responses emerged: bilingualism was predominantly selected for its perceived positive impact on intellectual development. The provision of a good education was the leading factor for most parents.

10.7 Discussion of the parental discourses

Results from another study dealing with parental choice (Irish-medium school – *Bunscoil* in Belfast) carried out by Maguire (1991) showed similarities to those from this inquiry; the absence of a nationalistic agenda (100), the bias toward professional parents (93), the limited fluency in Irish of the parents (108-11), the use of Irish especially during homework time (117). The high educational standards¹⁵⁹ and the favourable “pupil/teacher ratio” (95; 100) were the main justifications for the parental choice of school. Another influential factor was the “disillusionment with other schools” (100).¹⁶⁰

However, like other researchers, her interpretation of parental choice is culturally-based (see Chapters Five and Seven). For her, it is not linked to a parental strategy to gain access to a better school, although she noticed that parents “had devoted considerable thought to the advantages and disadvantages of sending their children to the Bunscoil” (98) and that they were attracted by the high educational standards (100). Rather she interpreted the

¹⁵⁹ Shannon (1999) also noted that the All-Irish schools had the “solid reputations of high academic quality” (114).

¹⁶⁰ See also Hickey (1997). She conducted an inquiry on the parents choosing an Irish nursery (*naíonra*). She found that parents had high levels of qualification and occupational status (37-8), generally poor Irish language competence (44-7), a lack of Irish language background (39-40) and that they chose a *naíonra* for “a mixture of language and non-language/educational reasons” (50).

choice of school, the display of energy and commitment of the parents as a cultural and identity choice: “[t]he sources of the motivation and commitment lie elsewhere within the deeper realms of culture and identity” (93). Rogers and McLeod (2006) offered a similar interpretation for Gaelic parents: “[p]arental demand and pressure, motivated principally by a desire for language maintenance, along with the preservation of cultural identity” (2006: 369) and Judge (2000: 58) understood the parental choice to be a sign of openness toward other cultures.¹⁶¹

It is significant that other inquiries on the same topic, that is, bilingual school choice in minority language situations, have found similar trends such as the presence of highly qualified parents without family connection to the language and parents who are fully committed to offering bilingual education for their children. The lack of parental fluency in the minority language was also noted in addition to the lack of interpersonal use of the language by the children outside school.

Numerous researchers reported the driving force of parents. McLeod (2003a: 17), Mac Gabhann (2004: 94) and Ó Murchú (2008: 12) noticed that Irish-medium schools were set up by highly motivated parents. This trend of “parental power” (Ward, 2003: 45), “lobbying” (Nisbet, 2003: 49) or “parent activism” (Rogers and McLeod, 2006: 368) has also been noted for the development of Gaelic-medium units.

Ó Riagáin (2001) was perplexed about “[h]ow and why this group [of *Bunscoil* parents without an Irish language background] began to use Irish in their adult years is not clear from the research... This group includes many of the small but growing minority of parents who have chosen Irish-medium education for their children” (203). He went on to state that such schooling brought “some degree of home bilingualism” (203); a “bilingualization”¹⁶² also noted by Maguire (1991: 113-5; 130) and Hickey (1997: 59)¹⁶³ after the first child had attended an Irish nursery.

¹⁶¹ Judge (2000) interpreted the interest in Breton-medium schools coming from non-Breton parents as a response to *Diwan*’s “desire to be open rather than narrowly nationalistic” (58), because their organization has a multinational approach: “the president of the association is an Englishman (and not a Welshman)...and the association boasts a Romanian and a Japanese teacher of Breton” (58).

¹⁶² Descriptors about what exactly “bilingualization” meant would have enhanced the understanding of the extent of Irish use within the household.

¹⁶³ Hickey (1997) reported “substantial increases in their use of Irish in the home” (59).

In the present inquiry, there was no evidence that minority language education leads to effective bilingualization. Indeed, minority language use of most parents without a language background was deemed too superficial and basic to have made any significant impact on the sociolinguistic pattern in any of the households. For the overwhelming majority of parents, there was no expectation that Breton or Gaelic would ever become the main home language, or even be used at all outside homework time.

This leads to one of the key implications from the study findings, namely that the school was mainly selected for educational reasons; parents often justified their choice by quoting studies evidencing the benefits of a bilingual education. This added validity to their decision.

Once again, it is important to flag up the small size of the sample in the two locations, which prevents any claim for the generalizability of the findings. The difference in the interpretation of the findings between the present inquiry and previous studies lies in the conceptual stance of the researcher. The positioning adopted by this inquiry has been explained in depth in the conceptual framework.

Despite the rising number of secondary speakers, the findings from the multifaceted approach taken here suggest that the minority language schools mostly lead to individual bilingualism, without any wider spread of the language to network level. It appeared to be a case of surface bilingualism, even when the speakers were highly competent.

This interpretation of the findings is underpinned by the stance that language continuity within a community and the everyday use of the language are the necessary basis for the strong vitality of minority languages.

More generally, the mobilization of highly educated parents with high expectations choosing a minority language education has been widely recognized for (see previous footnote 64):

- Welsh: Cummins and Genesee (1985) thought of Welsh-medium schools as “disguised grammar schools” (40) (see also Rawkins, 1987; Kleif, 1980: 205-13; Baker, 1997: 132).
- Irish (Ó Riagáin, 1997: 248-9; Hickey, 1997: 17; 157-8).
- Basque (Garmendia and Agote, 1997: 101).
- French in Canada (Swain, 1997: 262; Erfurt, 1999: 63; Heller, 2003: 86).

This trend is equally true for:

- Quechua (Hornberger and King, 1996: 432).
- Hawaiian renaissance (McCarty, 2008: 144).
- Maori revitalization (Durie, 1997: 15-6).

The widely reported educational benefits attracted more parents with a privileged background through the promise of educational, cultural and linguistic advantages. These parents' main motivation was educational performance.¹⁶⁴

However, O'Hanlon *et al* (2010) noted "a broader social range" (57) of parents choosing GME. This was also observed by Pentecouteau (2002) for the Breton movement: "[i]f elitism is still present in the Breton movement – like with every social movement that arises and develops, we observe the establishment of a [broader] social basis" (52), a kind of democratization of a previously exclusive practice. Such rationalization may explain the spectacular growth of minority language schooling, which has at its heart the interest of the parents in the education of their children. There is no doubt that these schools represent an educational success; however they do not appear to impact significantly on language revitalization itself.

¹⁶⁴ In 2010, the upper school *Diwan* from centre Brittany came second top in the national league table (Le Figaro, 2010).

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Summary of findings

In both locations, the choice of bilingual education was analysed against a backdrop of language shift.

In Brittany, the language disruption was at an extreme stage with no intergenerational transmission of Breton and no interpersonal communication through Breton between children and native speakers. It means that Breton is no longer in a diglossic position for the respondents and their household. For the parents with a family connection to Breton, all that remained of the language was the language background, its affects often combined with some vague knowledge of the language, which was frequently acquired via the grandparents and brushed up by a few courses. Most of the parents had basic language skills in Breton. Learning the standardized variety of Breton promoted through the school and by Breton activists appeared to occur in isolation from the native speakers. It rarely led to any language use.

- This shows the end of a language transmission within family and the impossibility for the school to draw on to the grandparents' language resource as support. The situation has gone beyond the stage of language continuity; it has become a case of language production where the Breton-medium parents depend entirely on the school institution to provide a Breton knowledge and fluency for their children.

In contrast, over half of the Gaelic-medium parents were fluent in Gaelic. The language competence and confidence of the parents in Gaelic mostly relied on the transmission of the language in childhood, offering a contrasting reading to the basic language skills of the Gaelic learners. The diglossic position of Gaelic was confirmed by the pattern of use of Gaelic the respondents reported. Gaelic was mainly used to interact with relatives and friends during social occasions; it was rarely used for reading or in formal domains.

Indicators of language shift across the generations (codeswitching, weaker language reproduction, transmission of Gaelic via the grandparents bypassing parents, receding use of Gaelic as a vernacular especially among the young generation) suggested a move

towards English as the main community language, even for the respondents whose families were indigenous to the island and showed language continuity. This, in turn provided less opportunity for the children to build a confident fluency in Gaelic. For over two thirds of the households, Gaelic use was limited to short sentences.

The majority of parents believed that the use of Gaelic as an everyday language was receding and they contrasted the actual language situation at grassroots level with the revitalization effort promoted at institutional level. As they commented on the language shift occurring in their community and even within the confines of their own home, they did not hold out much hope for a reversal of fortune on the island, despite its improved status within society at large.

- The situation of Gaelic presented a shifting diglossia among the respondents with a language background and the integration of English as the predominant vernacular among their children. This trend was progressing even within households with a strong embedding of Gaelic within their family history.

In fact, the actual situation of Gaelic bears some resemblance with the situation of Breton 50 years ago in terms of language use, language shift and intergenerational language transmission. Even though Gaelic is still used as an everyday language of communication within the island-community, a Gaelic-medium education does not seem to have much impact on the bilingualization of either the households where the language resource is available (parent), nor within non Gaelic-speaking homes (except during homework). Besides this, the school did not seem to help children in building relationships with their friends through the medium of Gaelic. However, the Gaelic-medium unit by its content teaching through the standard variety reinforces literacy in Gaelic and the language corpus. Similarly, the Breton-medium schools appeared to have had very little impact on the language pattern within families and on the children's vernacular use of the language.

Another characteristic common to both locations was the particular weighting of parents with a high level of qualification. They also belonged overwhelmingly to high occupational groupings, in contrast to the surrounding population. This indicated that the minority language education option was selected by a certain type of parents, who were as a group unrepresentative of their community or minority language speakers.

Parents in both locations were highly-informed about educational development. In enumerating their reasons for their school choice, they all agreed that the provision of bilingualism played a crucial role in their decision. Through the interviews, all the parents were highly satisfied with the education their children received, the educational outcomes and the cognitive advantages early bilingualism could provide.

Most Breton-medium parents appeared to give lesser priority to the minority language *per se*. Less than a fifth of the Breton-medium parents referred directly to Breton itself in their justification for their choice of school. In addition, although the language was mentioned by nearly half of the parents, it was in the context of imparting a cultural identity to the children, rather than a communicative competence.

For the Gaelic-medium parents, the range of responses regarding their choice of school was wider and less focused on educational attainment, even though this was the most cited reason. Their attraction to bilingualism was connected to its associated intellectual benefits and the perceived quality of education. In addition, more language-related reasons were put forward, such as a sense of responsibility for Gaelic, the importance of acquiring fluency and the presence of Gaelic within the family.

In Brittany and in the Western Isles, these middle-class parents nurtured high expectations for their children and believed that minority language education fulfilled their requirements. Their choice was mainly linked to a parental aim of providing a better education for their children in combination with or independent of supporting the revitalization of the minority language. In summary, the language was not their priority.

11.2 Limitations and future work

This work gives language planners an insight into parental choice. It also shows that a bottom-up approach is needed to develop effective policies and this can only be achieved with a deep understanding of the language situation at grassroots level. The findings from such a small sample cannot be generalized to apply to all parents who have opted for a minority language education, although the results were carefully interpreted in line with the researcher's particular positioning.

The strength of this exploratory study lies in its in-depth focus on the parents, while its limitation rests in the fact that data was neither directly collected from the children nor from the teachers to provide a triangulated approach. In future studies, the application of this method would help to give a fuller understanding of the role of minority language schools as revitalizing agencies or institutions for language production. Such research is needed as language loss is a worldwide phenomenon that is likely to continue.

In Brittany and in Scotland, the authorities and advisory bodies advocate the creation of more medium or bilingual schools to revitalize their minority languages (see CnES (2009)) and *Ofis Ar Brezhoneg* (2007: 86). In both locations, state-level organizations agree on the importance of making the teaching of the minority languages more general (the CnES hopes to have Gaelic-medium education as the mainstream option and for Breton, see *Ofis Ar Brezhoneg* (2007: 130)). Obviously, fluency in a language is paramount, but there are other more important factors that affect and shape a child's pattern of language use.

The overlap in the findings that suggest similar trends in both language situations could provide interesting results to direct future studies and understand the progression of language shift within communities. This would help language planners to intervene more rapidly within these communities and implement policies designed to reverse language shift with the help of ordinary people from these communities. It is important to recognize, however, that the key social factors identified as having an impact on language outcome would have to be isolated and controlled in order to enable a truly comparative study, which would generate safe conclusions.

It is a paradox that in Brittany, the call for teaching Breton originated mainly from non-minority language speakers. They demanded the right to educate their children through another language, which was itself considered 'foreign' by many first language speakers. These parents claimed to speak on behalf of the remaining native Breton speakers while their main aim was to provide their own children with a better education. In the Western Isles, this phenomenon was also found. Even though many parents were still linked to or spoke Gaelic themselves, there was a growing number of parents, unconnected in any way with the language, who had specifically chosen a Gaelic-medium education to ensure their children would benefit from educational advantages. Numerous studies (Hickey, 1997; McCarty, 1997; Swain, 1997; Johnstone *et al*, 1999; Harris, 2006; O'Hanlon *et al*, 2010)

attested the quality of the education children receive at minority language medium units or schools; it has been evaluated, audited and found to be excellent. This vindicates a valid and informed choice made by parents from an educational point of view.

However, this parental strategy to access what they believe to be better schools represents an unintended consequence for language planners. Attributing more prestigious functions to a minority language may only superimpose measures on a diglossic situation with little effect on the reversal of language shift. Drafting effective language revitalization policies requires a deep understanding of the attitudes ordinary people have towards their native language and of the political and social context within which the process of language shift takes place. Unless this understanding is achieved, a growing number of minority language medium schools or units will only provide a partial and short-lived solution to the decline of the language, resulting in a superficial bilingualism without any real impact at community levels.

At present, the general expectation is that children¹⁶⁵ receiving a minority language education will speak the minority language as a vernacular and pass it on to future generations (see MacCaluim, 2007: 77), but this presents a major challenge. While Judge (2007) believes that “Breton has risen from the ashes” (118), one should remain cautious. There is a difference between expressing a desire to learn a minority language and the actual reality of using it for meaningful speech acts. The non-fluent parents within this study shared those good intentions, but very few became fluent in Breton or in Gaelic.

Regarding the role of children in the language revitalization process, it would be illuminating to take into account their views and evaluate their language use once they have left school. A few researchers have pointed out the superficiality of the revitalization of minority languages through school. They warned against the smokescreen effect, where the increase in the number of speakers through minority language medium schools hides the fact that its interpersonal use is still declining. This suggests that knowing the minority language does not lead to its use outside the formal setting of the classroom and that

¹⁶⁵ This point questions the moral principles of a heritage bilingual education when examined under a liberal democratic approach, especially when the language used as a medium of instruction has only a low number of speakers (see Laitin and Reich, 2003; Levy, 2003).

As for the principle of immersion programmes (education through the means of a language other than their mother tongue), it goes against the recommendation of the group of experts advising UNESCO: “[t]he Joint Expert Group reiterated the Operational Definition of Basic Education, which provides that ‘Basic education is provided in the mother tongue, at least in its initial stages’” (UNESCO, 2010b: 3).

immersion schools or units may not necessarily provide a way to produce active speakers when intergenerational transmission is failing. In such a case, then despite bilingual provisions, language revitalization on a societal basis does not take place and the minority language becomes a solely individually-based competence.

It seems that reliance on schools to produce minority language speakers, rather than natural intergenerational language transmission and/or socialization, is flawed. The taught minority language usually remains confined to the school premises and does not seem to be integrated as an additional vernacular. Knowledge of the standardized variety of the minority language does not guarantee its use in practice.

The issue is not only about language skills retention, but also about the internalization of the language through integration in meaningful and durable networks, which provide opportunities for interpersonal use. Currently, the minority language schools appear neither to reinforce language use nor to create these networks. Thus, some researchers recommended that parents provide opportunities for the children to use the minority language in social situations outside the classroom. This holistic approach is deemed to provide an integrated system linking every facet of a child's life in the hope that this would reinforce language use. The challenge is to identify whether these arrangements would be lasting and allow for meaningful exchanges.

While bilingual or immersion schools have proven to be outstanding educational institutions, their effectiveness as revitalization agencies needs to be re-evaluated. One question to consider is why so few minority language parents with a lower socioeconomic profile opt for this type of education. Other points to explore are the social representations and values they associate with their language and how best to make the teaching of the minority language relevant to the local community. Perhaps one suggestion would be to make more use of the local variety of the language, which may encourage children to engage more with first language speakers. It would also be appropriate to use the linguistic resources of first language speakers within the school. It has to be reiterated that the scope of these future studies is of a worldwide interest due to the ever-increasing number of languages faced with extinction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS WHO HAVE CHOSEN GAELIC-MEDIUM EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Location of interview:

Brittany 1 Western Isles 2

Date of interview:

Day: Month: Year:

Respondent's relationship to the children in Gaelic-medium education:

Father	1	Mother	2
Other or family relative Please describe:	3	Other Please describe:	4

Respondent's (household) occupation:

:

Role/position:

:

Industry or sector:

:

Section 1: About the Children and What They Enjoy Doing

1. How many children do you have?

Number of children

2. How old are they?

Children	Names	Ages
Child 1		
Child 2		
Child 3		
Child 4		
Child 5		

3. Which one of your children received or are receiving Gaelic-medium education?

Child 1	1	Child 2	1	Child 3	1	Child 4	1	Child 5	1
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4. Which one of your children attended or attend a Gaelic nursery?

Child 1	1	Child 2	1	Child 3	1	Child 4	1	Child 5	1
---------	---	---------	---	---------	---	---------	---	---------	---

5. Did they learn Gaelic at nursery school?

6. How fluent would you say your children were in Gaelic when they first went to school?

Gaelic competence	communicate very successfully	communicate competently	communicate reasonably competently	communicate restricted messages	Just a few words & sentences	Not a word
Child 1	6	5	4	3	2	1
Child 2	6	5	4	3	2	1
Child 3	6	5	4	3	2	1
Child 4	6	5	4	3	2	1
Child 5	6	5	4	3	2	1

7. How fluent would you say your children are in Gaelic now?

Gaelic competence	communicate very successfully	communicate reasonably competently	communicate reasonably competently	communicate restricted messages	Just a few words & sentences
Child 1	5	4	3	2	1
Child 2	5	4	3	2	1
Child 3	5	4	3	2	1
Child 4	5	4	3	2	1
Child 5	5	4	3	2	1

8. In Gaelic, what skill do you think your children are best at?

Skills	Writing	Reading	Speaking	Listening
Child 1	5	4	3	2
Child 2	5	4	3	2
Child 3	5	4	3	2
Child 4	5	4	3	2
Child 5	5	4	3	2

9. Which leisure activities are your children participating in at the moment?
(sports, music & dance, theatre, reading etc.)

10. Which language do you think your children use when participating in these activities?

Activities	Language

Section 2: Choosing Gaelic Medium Education

11. How did you come to choosing Gaelic-medium education for your children?

12. Did you know any other parents?
How important was their advice?

Very Important 3	Fairly Important 2	Not Important 1
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13. How important is it to you that your children speak Gaelic?

Very Important 3	Fairly Important 2	Not Important 1
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Can you tell me why?

14. What are the advantages you have experienced in Gaelic-medium education?

15. What are the disadvantages you have experienced in Gaelic-medium education?

16. What, if anything, would you like to see done differently in the Gaelic-medium unit your child(ren) go to?

17. How important, if at all, were the following elements in making you choose Gaelic-medium education?

Elements	Very imp				Not imp
Bilingualism	5	4	3	2	1
Gaelic culture	5	4	3	2	1
Smaller classes	5	4	3	2	1
Methods of teaching/enthusi	5	4	3	2	1
Immersion	5	4	3	2	1

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Gaelic?

Statements	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral Position	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Gaelic-medium education is keeping Gaelic alive	5	4	3	2	1
Gaelic is not as commonly used as before	5	4	3	2	1
Learning Gaelic will not be helpful in learning other languages	5	4	3	2	1
Knowing Gaelic will be a plus in the job market	5	4	3	2	1
Gaelic is mostly used as a spoken language by old people	5	4	3	2	1
The impact of Gaelic learners on the future of the language will be minimal	5	4	3	2	1
Learning Gaelic will help the intellectual development of your children	5	4	3	2	1

19. If there was a school in your community which offered education through French or another European language or Gaelic what would be your first choice? Can you tell me why?

20. In your opinion, which subject is the most important at school? Any particular reasons?

21. In secondary school, which language option would you prefer your children to take for Standard Grade?

22. What are you hoping for your children in the future? Where do you think they will settle?

23. Do you think your children will use Gaelic as their main language?

24. What future do you see for Gaelic?

Section 3: About Your Views and Attitudes

25. What is it that you like about the lifestyle you have in the Western Isles?

26. What is it that you do not like about the lifestyle you have in the Western Isles?

27. Do you think your area has changed in recent years? If so, in what way?

28. How important do you think the following aspects are to a culture?

Cultural Aspects	Very imp				Not imp
Traditional dress	5	4	3	2	1
Traditional music	5	4	3	2	1
History	5	4	3	2	1
Community	5	4	3	2	1
Language	5	4	3	2	1
Traditions / values	5	4	3	2	1

29. What does Gaelic culture represent for you?

30. How supportive are you of the Gaelic language?

Very supportive 3	Fairly supportive 2	Not really supportive 1
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31. Have you noticed a change in recent years in your attitude towards Gaelic?
If so, in what way?

32. Do you think the image of Gaelic is changing or has changed? (typical Gaelic speaker?)

33. What did bring about your interest in Gaelic?

Section 4: About Languages and the Adults in the House

34. Which language do you have as your mother tongue? The other adults living in the house?

Adults Living in the House	Mother Tongue Language	Adults Living in the House	Mother Tongue Language
Adult 1		Adult 3	
Adult 2		Adult 4	

35. Do you speak any languages other than English? The other adults in the house?

Adults in household	Gaelic	French	German	Spanish	Other (specify)
Adult 1:	1	1	1	1	1
Adult 2	1	1	1	1	1
Adult 3	1	1	1	1	1
Adult 4	1	1	1	1	1

36. How would you describe your understanding of Gaelic? The other adults living in the house?

Gaelic understanding	Understand perfectly	Understand nearly everything	understand reasonably well	Understand restricted messages	Just a few words & sentences	Cannot understand Gaelic
Adult 1:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 2	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 3	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 4	6	5	4	3	2	1

37. How would you describe your ability to speak Gaelic? The other adults living in the house?

Gaelic competence	communicate very successfully	communicate competently	communicate reasonably competently	communicate restricted messages	Just a few words & sentences	Cannot speak Gaelic
Adult 1	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 2	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 3	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 4	6	5	4	3	2	1

38. How would you describe your ability to read in Gaelic? The other adults living in the house?

Reading in Gaelic	Can read virtually anything	Can read without many difficulties	Can read although with difficulties	Can read some sentences and words	Cannot read Gaelic at all
Adult 1:	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 2	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 3	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 4	5	4	3	2	1

39. How would you describe your ability to write in Gaelic? The other adults living in the house?

Writing in Gaelic	Can write virtually anything	Can write with not many difficulties	Can write although with difficulties	Can write simple messages in Gaelic	Can write some words	Cannot write in Gaelic
Adult 1	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 2	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 3	6	5	4	3	2	1
Adult 4	6	5	4	3	2	1

40. With whom or how did you learn Gaelic? The other adults living in the house? (where some level of competence in Gaelic is described)

Adults in household	At home with parents	At home with grand-parents	At school	Self-taught	In a course	Your child teaches you Gaelic	In the community	Other (specify)
Adult 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adult 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adult 3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Adult 4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

41. If you know Gaelic, at what age did you learn Gaelic?

42. Are you currently learning Gaelic?

	Respondent	Spouse
Yes	1	1
No, but intend to	2	2
No	3	3

43. What language did the grand-parents of your children have as their mother tongue?

Parents of Respondent	Gaelic	English	German	Spanish	Other (specify)
Mother	1	1	1	1	1
Father	1	1	1	1	1

Other grand-parents	Gaelic	English	German	Spanish	Other (specify)
Mother	1	1	1	1	1
Father	1	1	1	1	1

44. How long have you lived in the Western Isles for?

45. Where did you spend your childhood and your school years? (perhaps to lead on to what did you study)

46. Does your extended family live nearby?

Section 5: About Using Gaelic and English

You and the Children

47. How would you describe the pattern of language you tend to use speaking to your children?

Languages used when:	Gaelic almost all the time	Gaelic more than English	Both to the same extent	English more than Gaelic	English almost all the time
At home naturally with your children	5	4	3	2	1
They are doing their homework	5	4	3	2	1
During family leisure activities	5	4	3	2	1

48. Could you give any concrete examples of instances when you use Gaelic with your children? In which language do your children usually answer?

49. Which language would you say is most frequently used in your household?

50. How would you describe the pattern of language your children usually tend to use?

Your children speaking to:	Gaelic almost all the time	Gaelic more than English	Both to the same extent	English more than Gaelic	English almost all the time
Any other adults in your household	5	4	3	2	1
Their maternal grand-parents	5	4	3	2	1
Their paternal grand-parents	5	4	3	2	1
Amongst themselves	5	4	3	2	1
Their friends when out & about	5	4	3	2	1

51. Can you identify any particular activities or moments when your children use naturally Gaelic more than English?

52. How often do any of your children start a conversation with you in Gaelic (if at all)?

All the time 4	Most of the time 3	Occasionally 2	Never 1
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Youself and Others

53. How would you describe the pattern of language you, yourself tend to use?

Youself speaking to:	Gaelic almost all the time	Gaelic more than English	Both to the same extent	English more than Gaelic	English almost all the time
Your parents	5	4	3	2	1
Your brothers & sisters	5	4	3	2	1
Your neighbours	5	4	3	2	1
Your friends	5	4	3	2	1
Teenagers *	5	4	3	2	1

*If spoken to in Gaelic, in which language do the teenagers usually answer?

54. If you have or take part in any of the following activities, which language do you expect to use?

Social or Leisure Activities	Language usually in use	
	Gaelic	English
Reading books at home	2	1
Reading newspapers at home	2	1
At church services, meetings or prayer groups	2	1
Going to concerts/ceilidhs	2	1
Going to meetings	2	1
Listening to the radio	2	1
Watching television	2	1

55. Where, or in what situations, do you find Gaelic being used most?

56. What is it about these situations that make them more likely to bring about Gaelic use?

57. Anything you would like to add?

[Thank you for your help]

APPENDIX B:

UNDERSTANDING THE OCCUPATIONAL SCALE

It is important to note that in each country (France and Scotland) the occupational categories are slightly different; the *Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques* (INSEE) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) do not apply the same scale. Many occupations such as teachers, social workers, nurses, etc. regarded as belonging to the Intermediate category in France are placed within the Professional category in Scotland. Therefore, the category Intermediate parents (many parents were teachers and social workers) in Brittany is found under the rubric Professional in Scotland. If the ONS scale is used, in both locations, the findings indicate the similar weighting towards the professional occupations (see the following definition by INSEE).

Definition according to INSEE

Level 2: Intermediate occupations

“The category ‘Intermediate occupations’ belongs to a new classification of socio-economic categories. Two third of its members occupy an intermediate position between managerial and lower supervisory and technical employees, employees, semi-routine and routine workers.

The others are in an intermediate position in a figurative way. They work in the teaching profession, health and the social sector; among them, are primary teachers, nurses, social workers¹⁶⁶ (*my translation* INSEE, n.d.)

The use of different scales was necessary to offer a comparative instrument with the surrounding population in Brittany and in the Western Isles.

¹⁶⁶ Niveau 2 - Catégories socioprofessionnelles: Professions Intermédiaires

L'appellation “professions intermédiaires” est une création de la nouvelle nomenclature des professions et catégories socioprofessionnelles. Deux tiers des membres du groupe occupent effectivement une position intermédiaire entre les cadres et les agents d'exécution, ouvriers ou employés.

Les autres sont intermédiaires dans un sens plus figuré. Ils travaillent dans l'enseignement, la santé et le travail social; parmi eux, les instituteurs, les infirmières, les assistantes sociales”.

IN FRANCE

Table used to compare the findings with the surrounding population

Répartition des actifs selon la catégorie socio-professionnelle

	Effectifs en 1999	%	BRITTANY FIGURES ACCORDING TO OWN SCALE IN PHD
Agriculteurs exploitants	4 340	3,8%	Farmers: 3.8%
Artisans, commerçants et chefs d'entreprise	9 540	8,2%	Business owners: 8.2%
Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures	10 460	9,0%	Professional: 9%
Professions intermédiaires	25 060	21,6%	Intermediate: 21.6%
Employés qualifiés	14 830	12,8%	Skilled (12.8+16.7): 29.5%
Ouvriers qualifiés	19 300	16,7%	
Employés non qualifiés	16 480	14,2%	Unskilled (14.2+13.6): 27.8%
Ouvriers non qualifiés	15 730	13,6%	
Total	115 750	100,0%	

(Source : INSEE - Recensement de population 1999 au lieu de travail - Traitement GREF Bretagne)

(GREF Bretagne, juin 2008: 23)

Explanation of the transposed occupational scale from French to English

'Professional': *'Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures'*;

'Intermediate': *'Professions intermédiaires'*;

'Business owners': *'Artisans, commerçants et chefs d'entreprise'*;

'Skilled': category combining *'Employés qualifiés'* and *'Ouvriers qualifiés'*;

'Unskilled': *'Employés non qualifiés'* and *'Ouvriers non qualifiés'*;

'Farmers': *'Agriculteurs exploitants'*.

UNEMPLOYMENT

In Brittany, for the whole population, the statistics are different: Unemployment in Brittany: 9.5%; Inactivity: 3.6%)

Figures calculated from the graph of Moro, source INSEE (2008: 14).

IN SCOTLAND

THE NS-SEC SELF-CODED METHOD

Occupational categories from the Office for National Statistics (n.d.b)

PROFESSIONAL

Modern professional:

Such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, welfare officer, artist, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer

Traditional professional occupations

Such as: accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil servant, mechanical engineer

Senior managers or administrators:

(Usually responsible for planning, organizing and work and for finance)

INTERMEDIATE

Middle or junior managers:

Such as: office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager, publican

Clerical and intermediate occupations:

Such as: secretary, personal assistant, clerical worker, office clerk, call centre agent, nursing auxiliary, nursery nurse

Such as: finance manager, chief executive

SKILLED

Technical and craft occupations:

Such as: motor mechanic, fitter, inspector, plumber, printer, tool maker, electrician, gardener, train driver

MANUAL (semi-routine and routine combined)

Semi-routine manual and service occupations:

Such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, receptionist, sales assistant

Routine and manual and service occupations:

Such as: HGV driver, van driver, cleaner, porter, packer, sewing machinist, messenger, bar staff, waiter/waitress, labourer

UNWAGED

Never worked

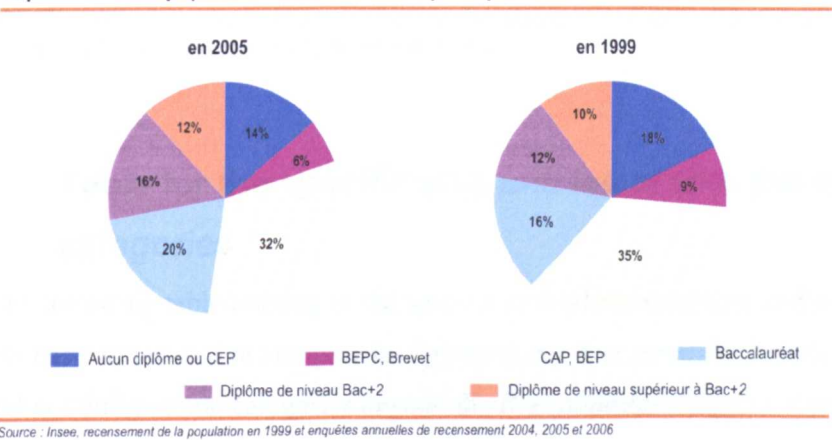
APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF QUALIFICATION

Figures, translation and scale

For this work, it is relevant to compare the obtained figures with the official figures of the level of qualification within the population of Brittany (INSEE, 2008, ‘La population active bretonne au 1er janvier 2005’).

This is the official document on which the data found in the PhD for the Breton population is based on.

Répartition de la population active bretonne par diplôme

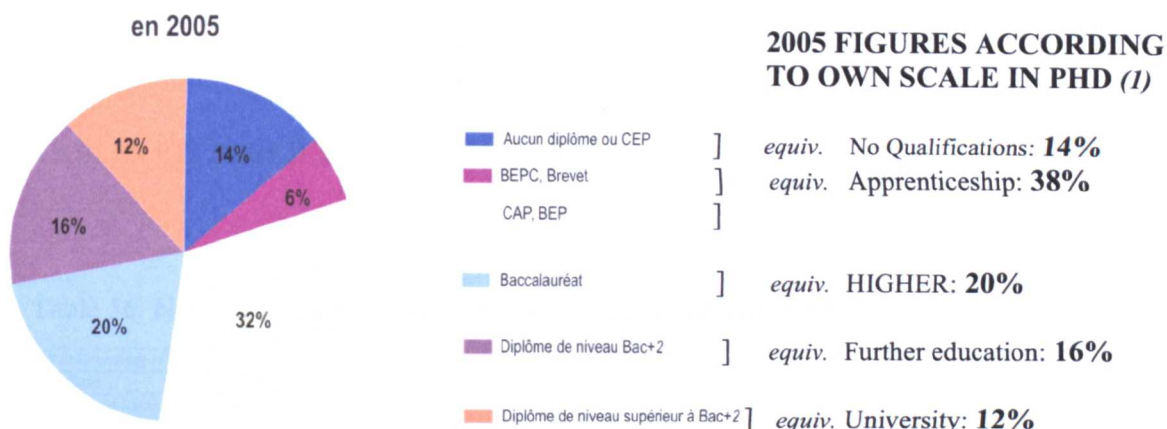


(INSEE, 2008: 15)

Figure 58: Breton population by level of qualification in 2005 and 1999

The more recent pie chart of 2005 was selected, then the scale loosely based on the scale of the Scottish government used for the 2001 census was applied (Scotland’s Census Results Online ‘Definition – Highest level of Qualification’).

Répartition de la population active bretonne par diplôme



Source : Insee, recensement de la population en 1999 et enquêtes annuelles de recensement 2004, 2005 et 2006

(my rearranged legend INSEE, 2008: 15)

(1) The equivalence scale does not offer a perfect match, it is simplified and drawn up for the purpose of providing a straightforward comparative tool.

Table for the specific area and issue with the number of categories

The following table relating to the specific area where sampling took place was considered too basic to be used to compare its figures to my data generated by the sample of parents. It did not differentiate categories beyond the *Baccalauréat* (Higher), therefore it was not used.

Table 55: Population of South Finistère by levels of qualification

	Effectifs en 1999	%
Population active totale		
Niveaux > au Bac	29 930	22,5%
Niveau Bac	22 950	17,3%
Niveau CAP-BEP	46 970	35,3%
< CAP - BEP	22 930	17,3%
Non déclaré ou sans diplôme	10 120	7,6%

(Source : INSEE - Recensement de population 1999 - Traitement GREF Bretagne)

(GREF Bretagne, juin 2008: 19)

APPENDIX D: TABLES

TABLES REFERRED TO IN THE MAIN TEXT

Table 56: Number of speakers in the Southern part of the Western Isles

UV12 Knowledge of Gaelic										
All people										
Geographical level : Inhabited Islands										
	ALL PEOPLE	Understands spoken Gaelic but cannot speak, read or write Gaelic	Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic	Speaks but neither reads nor writes Gaelic	Speaks and reads but cannot write Gaelic	Reads but neither speaks nor writes Gaelic	Writes but neither speaks nor reads Gaelic	Reads and writes but does not speak Gaelic	Other combination of skills in Gaelic	No knowledge of Gaelic
SUMMARY	5828	450	2298	1066	493	41	11	40	7	1422
Barra	1078	82	405	242	94	10	2	7	0	236
Benbecula	1249	109	401	221	79	10	2	5	2	420
Berneray (North Uist)	136	8	64	14	8	4	0	0	0	38
Eriskay	133	6	63	22	19	1	0	1	0	21
North Uist	1320	98	577	203	106	9	2	7	1	317
South Uist	1818	142	749	357	180	6	5	17	4	358
Vatersay	94	5	39	7	7	1	0	3	0	32

(Extact from Table UV12: ‘Knowledge of Gaelic’, General Register Office for Scotland)

Table 57: Knowledge of Gaelic by age in the Southern part of the Western Isles

CAS206 Sex and age by knowledge of Gaelic			
All people			
Geographical level : Inhabited Islands - Summary for all areas Barra, Benbecula, Berneray (North Uist), Eriskay, North Uist, South Uist, Vatersay			
	ALL PEOPLE	Understands, speaks, reads or writes Gaelic	No knowledge of Gaelic
ALL PEOPLE	5828	4406	1422
0 - 2	177	76	101
3 - 4	125	66	59
5 - 11	558	386	172
12 - 15	408	323	85
16 - 24	463	343	120
25 - 34	685	518	167
35 - 59	2101	1568	533
60 - 69	695	584	111
70 - 79	402	349	53
80 - 89	178	159	19
90 and over	36	34	2

(Extract from Table CAS206: ‘Sex and age by knowledge of Gaelic’, Inhabited Islands of southern part of Western Isles, All People, General Register Office for Scotland)

(Table CAS206)

All people, Southern part of Western Isles

Table 58: Levels of qualification in Western Isles area by knowledge of Gaelic

T27 Theme table on Gaelic speakers																
All people																
Geographical level : Council Area - Eilean Siar																
ALL PEOPLE	Age	Gaelic Speakers								Non-Gaelic Speakers						
		0 - 4	5 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 and over	0 - 4	5 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 and over	
ALL PEOPLE	26502	263	1834	489	4190	4723	2159	2184	1031	1875	605	3802	2445	536	366	
Highest level of qualification																
No qualifications or qualifications outwith these groups	7127	X	X	56	819	2667	1639	X	X	X	84	676	907	279	X	
Group 1	4375	X	X	239	1331	628	150	X	X	X	326	1191	428	82	X	
Group 2	2742	X	X	171	849	458	74	X	X	X	173	740	240	37	X	
Group 3	1199	X	X	23	431	140	33	X	X	X	20	415	122	15	X	
Group 4	3506	X	X	0	760	830	263	X	X	X	2	780	748	123	X	
Not aged 16 - 74	7553	263	1834	X	X	X	X	2184	1031	1875	X	X	X	X	366	

(Extract from Table 27: 'Theme table on Gaelic speakers' General Register Office for Scotland, Western Isles, All people)

Table 59: Occupational classification in Western Isles area by knowledge of Gaelic

T27 Theme table on Gaelic speakers																		
All people																		
Geographical level : Council Area - Eilean Siar																		
ALL PEOPLE	Age	Gaelic Speakers								Non-Gaelic Speakers								75 and over
		0 - 4	5 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 and over		0 - 4	5 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 and over		
ALL PEOPLE	26502	263	1834	489	4190	4723	2159	2184		1031	1875	605	3802	2445	536	366		
Occupation																		
In employment	11511	X	X	242	3443	2895	163	X		X	X	305	2878	1522	63	X		
1. Managers and senior officials	1118	X	X	2	257	285	22	X		X	X	6	284	240	22	X		
2. Professional occupations	1115	X	X	1	268	295	17	X		X	X	2	270	254	8	X		
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	1372	X	X	8	452	285	7	X		X	X	18	379	217	6	X		
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	1114	X	X	15	430	194	14	X		X	X	20	302	136	3	X		
5. Skilled trades occupations	2350	X	X	53	757	614	47	X		X	X	81	547	241	10	X		
6. Personal service occupations	1066	X	X	20	363	332	8	X		X	X	14	235	91	3	X		
7. Sales and customer service occupations	708	X	X	61	183	110	9	X		X	X	69	195	78	3	X		
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	1161	X	X	17	352	362	20	X		X	X	41	266	101	2	X		
9. Elementary occupations	1507	X	X	65	381	418	19	X		X	X	54	400	164	6	X		
Not currently working	7438	X	X	247	747	1828	1996	X		X	X	300	924	923	473	X		
Not aged 16 - 74	7553	263	1834	X	X	X	X	2184		1031	1875	X	X	X	X	366		

(Extract from Table 27 'Theme table on Gaelic speakers', Western Isles, All People, General Register Office for Scotland)

Table 60: Occupation by industry for the whole of Scotland

CAS039 Occupation by industry														
All people aged 16 - 74 in employment the week before the Census														
Geographical level : Council Areas - Summary for all areas: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll & Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, City of, Eilean Siar, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow City, Highland, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Orkney Islands, Perth & Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, Shetland Islands, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian														
	ALL PEOPLE	Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	Mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water supply	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	Hotels and restaurants	Transport, storage and communication	Financial intermediaries	Real estate, renting and business activities	Public administration, defence, social security	Education	Health and social work	Other
ALL PEOPLE	2261281	55146	50757	299213	169150	325335	129865	151618	104866	252662	158099	164978	279635	119997
1. Managers and senior officials	275251	3943	3911	37891	14996	62329	26890	19019	21254	34805	15338	3241	16613	13021
2. Professional occupations	245084	966	6302	17976	7385	3949	599	3896	6935	53171	13414	93468	28586	8437
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	316168	891	7715	34001	7016	18141	2198	12367	20161	43032	52699	13876	84228	19823
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	287921	2000	5647	23169	10332	25346	6340	17245	41663	43776	50335	15902	32954	14214
5. Skilled trades occupations	275452	29329	7860	60334	84744	32002	19121	10923	501	12317	4365	2716	4284	8956
6. Personal service occupations	161418	1141	335	865	458	1046	4247	7716	325	5329	8582	22676	85221	25477
7. Sales and customer service occupations	195355	439	3831	7923	1691	127548	8564	10353	11948	11842	2831	944	2148	7593
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	218170	2831	10857	87858	24774	18810	1352	45722	541	12506	2705	2599	2833	4365
9. Elementary occupations	286482	13586	2299	30199	17754	36164	62554	24377	1538	35886	10090	9556	22768	19711
Footnotes:														
1 The industry categorisation is based on the UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 1992 (SIC92).														
2 'Other' industry includes other community, social & personal service activities, private households with employed persons and extra-territorial organisations and bodies.														
3 The occupation classification is based on the SOC2000 (Standard Occupation Classification).														
4 'In employment' means all people aged 16 to 74 who are working whether full-time student or not.														

(Table CAS039: 'Occupation by industry for the whole of Scotland', Whole of Scotland, All people, General Register Office for Scotland)

Table 61: Occupation by industry for the selected island locations (output areas)

CAS039 Occupation by industry														
All people aged 16 - 74 in employment the week before the Census														
Geographical level : Inhabited Islands - Summary for all areas														
	ALL PEOPLE	Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	Mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water supply	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	Hotels and restaurants	Transport, storage and communication	Financial intermediaries	Real estate, renting and business activities	Public administration, defence, social security	Education	Health and social work	Other
ALL PEOPLE	470	44	6	42	43	40	39	66	6	22	27	52	68	15

(Table CAS039: 'Occupation by industry for the selected island locations' (output areas), General Register Office for Scotland)

Table 62: Occupational classification for the selected island locations (output areas)

CAS039 Occupation by industry	
All people aged 16 - 74 in employment the week before the C	
Geographical level : Inhabited Islands - Summary for all areas	
	ALL PEOPLE
ALL PEOPLE	470
1. Managers and senior officials	44
2. Professional occupations	45
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	51
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	31
5. Skilled trades occupations	115
6. Personal service occupations	49
7. Sales and customer service occupations	19
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	53
9. Elementary occupations	63

(Extract from Table CAS039: 'Occupation by industry', All people aged 16 to 74 in employment the week before the Census, in selected island locations, General Register Office for Scotland)

APPENDIX E: DESCRIPTORS OF CEFR AND OTHER SCALES

Descriptors in the common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)	
LEVELS	DESCRIPTION
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

Table from the Council of Europe (n.d.)

There are many scales commonly used to assess language proficiency. An alignment of some of these scales has been designed by the Department of Education and Skills (West and Reeves, 2003).

The following table represents an approximate alignment of some scales listed below with my own:

- City and Guilds (2011), EFL/ESOL/EAL scale;
- International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) scale from the Official Journal of the European Union (2005);
- SIL (1999).

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE			
LEVELS (EFL/ESOL/EAL*)	LEVELS (ICAO)	LEVELS (SIL)	OWN SCALE
~	~	~	No language skills
Preliminary	Pre-elementary	Novice	Few words and sentences
Access (level 1)	Elementary	~	
Achiever (level 2)	Pre-operational	Intermediate	Restricted messages
Communicator (level 3)	Operational	Advanced	~
Expert (level 4-6)	Extended	Superior	Reasonably well
Mastery (level 7-8)	Expert	Distinguished	Nearly everything

* English as a Foreign Language/ English for speakers of other languages/ English as an additional language

APPENDIX F: LETTER TO PARENTS

Foreword:

A quick introduction about myself:

♦ Who am I?

Fabienne Goalabre, Ph.D. student registered with the UHI and the Open University. I have two supervisors who check my work and my code of practice: Professor Johnstone from Stirling University and Dr MacNeil, director of Leirsinn research centre.

♦ What am I doing?

I am looking at the language patterns and the lifestyle of people that choose medium education for their children. This inquiry is conducted in the Western Isles for Gaelic and in Brittany for Breton.

Questions to which the questionnaire is looking for answers:

- Socio-economic location
- Gaelic and the household, the parent
- Parent's attitude to Gaelic
- Children and Gaelic use
- Reasons for choosing a Gaelic medium unit

♦ Why do I need your cooperation?

By answering the questionnaire, you will give me data which I will process and analyse later on. The parents of sixty children will be contacted across the Western Isles.

♦ Guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality:

The questionnaire is totally anonymous and confidential, following the code of deontology of researchers. I will be the only person to process and analyse the questionnaire. In the analysis, nobody will be referred to by name or be identifiable. A report will be written and the emphasis will be on percentage, not on individual cases.

♦ Who has authorised me to contact you?

I have been authorised to contact you by Ms Joan MacKinnon, primary Adviser for the Western Isles council.

♦ What about the questionnaire?

The questionnaire can be separated in three parts. The first one is centered around your children, the second one is about Gaelic and your household and the last one relates your points of view and your choice for Gaelic medium education. Although it appears long, do not worry, many questions are quick to answer and I think that most questions are straight forward.

APPENDIX G:

CHARTER DIWAN (English and French)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (ICDBL, n.d.)

Article 6. Diwan declares its hostility to all linguistic uniformisation and is supportive of diverse forms of cultural expression, affirming that only in being complimentary can they be a source of unity, and of mutual and collective enrichment. The Breton taught in the Diwan preschools is that used in their geographic and human environment.

Article 7. In conformance with the inalienable rights of people to express their own culture, Diwan calls on all people who love democracy, Breton cultural organizations, and unionised groups-especially of teachers--to fight with her for more justice and against all forms of cultural dominance.

Article 8. Diwan declares its solidarity with all peoples who fight for their cultural identity, including immigrant workers, affirming that their diversity contributes to the enrichment of the human patrimony.

ORIGINAL VERSION (*Diwan Breizh*, 2001d)

6. Diwan déclare son hostilité à toute uniformisation linguistique et est attachée aux diverses formes d'expression culturelle, affirmant que seul leur complémentarité est source d'unité, d'enrichissement mutuel et collectif.

7. Conformément aux droits inaliénables des peuples à s'exprimer par leur propre culture, Diwan appelle toutes les personnes éprises de démocratie, les organisations culturelles bretonnes, les organisations syndicales notamment d'enseignants, à lutter avec elle pour plus de justice et contre toutes les formes de domination culturelle.

8. Diwan se déclare solidaire de tous les peuples qui luttent pour leur identité culturelle, en y insérant les travailleurs immigrés, affirmant que leur diversité concourt à enrichir le patrimoine humain.